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The story of restoration of their architecture that advocates a community-led way of life

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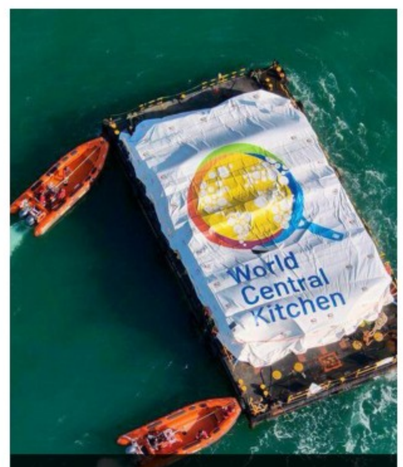

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'Surya is top performer'

BENGALURU
Having posed the highest number of questions in Parliament and spent more funds under MPLADS, Tejasvi Surya has topped performance among the three BJP MPs in Bengaluru, revealed an analysis by B.PAC. » Page 3

CM, Shivakumar sweating it out

BENGALURU
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has been criss-crossing the Lok Sabha constituencies of Mysuru and Chamarajanagar, while his deputy D.K. Shivakumar is aggressively campaigning in Bengaluru Rural and Mandya. » Page 6

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CAA Rules allow dual citizenship: pleas in SC

They argue that foreign applicants not having to renounce the citizenship of their native country while getting Indian citizenship will be directly violative of the Citizenship Act of 1955

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Rules of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act do not require foreign applicants to effectively renounce the citizenship of their native country, creating a possibility for dual citizenship which is directly violative of the Citizenship Act, petitioners have argued in the Supreme Court.

Written submissions filed by the petitioners ahead of the April 9 hearing of their plea to stay the CAA Rules said that Section 9 of the Citizenship Act of 1955 and Article 9 of the Constitution both clearly and explicitly prohibit the acquisition of dual citizenship.

Fundamental question

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the pleas against the CAA and related rules on April 9

- Petitioners say rules overlook the fact that effective renunciation of citizenship is a prerequisite for citizenship in cases where the nationality of another country is clearly attributable to the applicant
- They ask why only a selected group of migrants are eligible
- They see 'fundamental flaw' in claim that CAA and its rules will help persecuted minorities

The petitioners, led by the Indian Union Muslim League, represented by senior advocate Kapil Sibal and advocate Haris Beeran, said that the 2024 Rules are rife with defects, and have even overlooked the fact that "effective renunciation of citizenship was an important prerequisite for granting citizenship in cases where the nationality of another country is clearly attributable to the applicant".

"Allowing dual citizenship, one of them being Indian, makes the Rules both "*ultra vires* and manifestly arbitrary," they submitted.

The petitioners noted that a presumption of religious persecution is inherent in the CAA. The Union government views the law as a succour for refugees who fled persecution from the target countries with state religions.

But only a "selected group" of such migrants are eligible for the benefits of CAA, the petitioners said. Excluded refugee groups continue to remain illegal migrants, barred from seeking Indian citizenship under any mode.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

All-weather road gives a strategic fillip to Ladakh

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The latest feat of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in Ladakh, connecting Himachal Pradesh and Leh through the Nimmu-Padam-Darcha road, has come as a shot in the arm for security forces stationed in the region, and added significantly to India's strategic depth in the hostile border neighbourhood.

The BRO's breakthrough, achieved on March 27, has paved the way to open up the far-off Zanskar Valley for the safest ordnance depot, away from the prying eyes of China and Pakistan, officials privy to the development told *The Hindu*.

The Nimmu-Padam-Darcha road allows surface movement from Leh to Lahaul-Spiti through the world's highest tunnel at Shinku La Pass at 16,580 feet, which is under construction.

Construction work of Shinku La tunnel under way near the Zanskar river in Ladakh. PTI

"It will be the first all-weather road connecting Ladakh to the rest of the country," an official said.

The tunnel is likely to be completed by 2025.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

Pak. slams Rajnath's 'provocative' remarks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's comments that "if terrorists run away to Pakistan, we will enter Pakistan to kill them", the spokesperson of Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday "denounced the provocative remarks" while asserting that Pakistan stands resolute in its "intent and ability" to safeguard its sovereignty against any "act of aggression".

The office of the spokesperson said in a statement that on January 25, Pakistan had provided "irrefutable" evidence, "elucidating India's campaign of extra-judicial and transnational assassinations" on Pakistani soil.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

Virtual journey

Celestial experience: 'The Indian Space Odyssey: Sounding Rockets to Gaganyaan', a sky show on the Gaganyaan mission launched by the Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium in Bengaluru. The 30-minute show will open to the public from Sunday. BHAGYA PRAKASH K. (REPORT ON PAGE 3)

Nirmala concedes delay in drought relief; says EC nod sought to hold meet

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said the Union government had written to the Election Commission (EC) on March 28 seeking permission to hold a meeting of the high-level committee to clear several proposals for disaster relief, including drought relief for Karnataka.

Conceding that this could be construed as a "delay", she claimed it was not intentional and the "processes had taken time". "The government will clear disaster relief once the meeting is held," she said, speaking at a press conference organised by the BJP here on Saturday. Interestingly, the Karnataka government knocked on the doors of the Supreme Court seeking drought relief for the State, arguing there had been an inordinate delay by the Union government, on March 23. The Tamil Nadu government has also moved the apex court over the delay in disaster relief funds from the Union government.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman addressing a press conference in Bengaluru on Saturday. BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra is seen. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, speaking at an election rally in the State recently, had alleged that the State had delayed submitting its proposal by three months, that has been strongly countered by the State government.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 2

States offer thousands of hectares of 'degraded' forest land for green credits

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

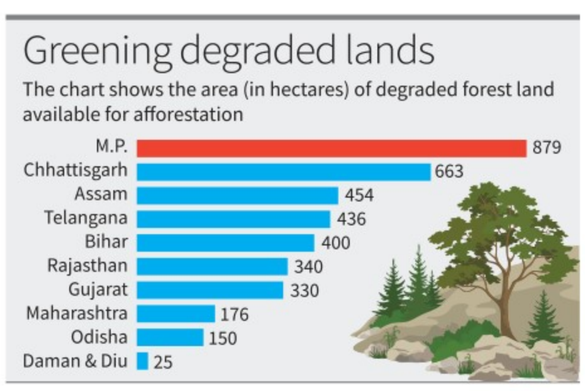
Weeks after the Union Environment Ministry announced the rules for its Green Credit Programme (GCP), 10 States have identified parcels of degraded forest land, totalling about 3,853 hectares, that will be available for individuals, groups, public and private sector units to earn – and potentially trade – green credits.

A perusal of public documents by *The Hindu* suggests that Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh alone account for up to 40% of the forest land made available.

Under the scheme, registered and approved entities can pay to finance afforestation projects in specific tracts of degraded forest and wasteland. The actual afforestation will be carried out by State forest departments.

Greening degraded lands

The chart shows the area (in hectares) of degraded forest land available for afforestation



Two years after planting – and following an evaluation by the International Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), an autonomous body of the Environment Ministry – each planted tree could be worth one 'green credit'.

These green credits can then be used by companies which have diverted forest land for non-forest purposes and razed thousands of trees to offset some of their obligations under India's compensatory afforestation laws.

These laws oblige any industry or institution that is permitted to raze forest and use that land for non-forestry purposes, to provide an equivalent amount of non-forest land to forest authorities and pay them to afforest that land.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

BMCRI girls' hostel GE outbreak: Two test positive for cholera

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Of the 47 medical students of Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI) girls' hostel who had been admitted to Victoria hospital with acute gastroenteritis (GE), two have tested positive for cholera, hospital authorities said.

Mohammed Mohsin, Principal Secretary, Medical Education, who visited the hospital and inspected the girls' hostel, said the students' condition is stable.

"While 21 students have been discharged, the reports of stool samples of the remaining students that were sent for culture and sensitivity test are awaited," Mr. Mohsin told *The Hindu*.

Pointing out that they are being treated with antibiotics and IV fluids, he said the BBMP has been informed about the cases as cholera is a notifiable disease. "Of the 700 students in the BMCRI girls' hostel, only 47 developed symptoms. The water samples from the girls' hostel have tested negative for cholera," he said.

Chairperson of the Karnataka State Commission for Women Nagalakshmi Chowdhary visited sick medical students and took up a *suo motu* case on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

With the two BMCRI cholera cases and two more reported from the city's outskirts on Saturday, the total number of confirmed cholera cases in the State in 2024 has now touched 10, said Health Commissioner Randeep D.

Warden suspended

Mr. Mohsin said he has directed the BMCRI Dean to place the hostel warden Akhilandeshwari under suspension.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 2

Full house: Passengers inside the train towards Sangaldan in Jammu and Kashmir.

Snow and shine: A train chugs out of the Pir Panjal tunnel, India's longest train tunnel, on a snow-covered track at Banihal.

Power on: The first electric train in the Kashmir Valley between Sangaldan station and Baramulla station on its maiden voyage.

The valley is not far

Passing through difficult mountainous terrain, the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link is expected to provide year-round connectivity to the Kashmir Valley

Nissar Ahmad
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At a height of 359 metre over the river Chenab, taller than the Eiffel tower in Paris, the Chenab bridge is the world's highest railway bridge.

The arch bridge will connect Bakkal and Kauri villages in Reasi district of Jammu division in Jammu and Kashmir. The engineering marvel lies in the seismic zone IV, and can withstand earthquakes up to a magnitude of 8 on the Richter scale, high-intensity blasts, and winds up to speeds of 260 kilometre per hour.

The bridge, expected to become functional later this year, is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project of the Indian Railways. Passing through difficult mountainous terrain, the project includes several major bridges and tunnels, including the Pir Panjal tunnel – India's longest railway tunnel at over 11 kilometre in length. The USBRL aims at connecting J&K's summer capital Srinagar with the rest of India's rail network.

Construction work on the bridge began in 2004 but was suspended in 2008-09, considering safety issues due to frequent high-velocity winds in the area. However, the work resumed in 2010. The bridge is expected to have a lifespan of 120 years.

On February 20, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off various rail projects in J&K including the new 48-km railway line between Banihal-Khari-Sumber-Sangaldan and the newly electrified Baramulla-Srinagar-Banihal-Sangaldan section (185.66 km). The Prime Minister also flagged off the first electric train in the Kashmir valley and a train service between Sangaldan and Baramulla stations. There are at least eight tunnels between Sangaldan and the beginning of Chenab Bridge, which connects Jammu with Kashmir. The project also includes the Anji Bridge, the first cable-stayed bridge of Indian Railways.

The partial commissioning of USBRL, which includes the Banihal-Khari-Sumber-Sangaldan section, is significant as it features the usage of Ballastless Track (BLT) all along the route, providing a better riding experience to the passengers.

As of now, the operational extent of the railway line is till Udhampur district in Jammu. In the Valley, the operational section is from Banihal in southern Kashmir to the border district of Baramulla in northern Kashmir.

The only road link to the Valley, NH-44, often remains closed in winter months due to snowfall, landslides and other natural calamities. This strategic rail link can provide connectivity during such conditions while also providing the armed forces an efficient transport system to access sensitive border areas along the Line of Control with Pakistan and the Line of Actual Control with China.

Difficult terrain: A view of Sangaldan-Khari section of the USBRL project in Ramban district.

Travel made easy: Passengers have a relaxed ride along the Banihal-Katra section.

From Page One

Nirmala concedes delay in drought relief

Following a memorandum for drought relief by Karnataka, a Central team visited the State for a spot inspection in October, 2023 and submitted a report the next month.

Ms. Sitharaman said: "Under the Prime Ministership of Narendra Modi, the Union government has not treated any State differently. Proposals before the high-level committee meeting, whenever it happens if EC allows it, are drought relief for Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, relief over damage caused by Michaung cyclone in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and relief over floods and landslides in Assam, Sikkim and Tamil Nadu." Ms. Sitharaman while conceding that the "delay in such matters is completely avoidable", said the financial relief in times of disasters was to be provided by the State governments.

"There is no concept of an interim relief or financial relief in times of disasters under the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The State governments have to provide immediate financial relief from the State Disaster Response Funds.

For Karnataka's SDRF of ₹929.60 crore, the share of the Union government is ₹697.60 crore which has been released in advance even before the disaster in two instalments," she said.

It can be recalled that the State government announced the first instalment of crop loss compensation of ₹2,000 per farmer in November, 2023.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had said that this was only the first instalment and the rest would be paid once the Union government provided drought relief.

Two test positive for cholera at BMCRI hostel

"The food inspector has been instructed to visit all the kitchens in BMCRI and attached hospitals and recommend food hygiene, if it is not being maintained," he said. "The housekeeping agency M/s. Detectwell has been instructed to regularly clean all the floors, kitchens, and toilets of the hostel on a shift basis. Also, manual attendance in the girls' hostel will be stopped immediately, and biometric attendance will be started," he said.

"The Dean informed that neither the warden nor the students of the girls' hostel had brought to his notice regarding the poor sanitation and unhygienic conditions in the hostel. There is a gross shortage of hostel facilities for the BMCRI students, as the number of students has increased, and BMCRI is also accommodating students from Government Dental College and Research Institute. There is a proposal to construct an additional hostel on Palace Road in Gandhinagar at an approximate cost of ₹65 crore," he said.

Following the outbreak, Nagalakshmi Chowdhary, chairperson of the Karnataka State Commission for Women, who inspected the girls' hostel and visited the ailing students, took up a *suo motu* case against the medical college authorities. "I have found that the complaints regarding poor sanitation and unhygienic conditions in the hostel are true. There are bedbugs in the hostel and the kitchen is not maintained properly. I have sought a report from the Dean and recommended action against the warden," she said.

Following this, BMCRI Dean and Director Ramesh Krishna K. said in a statement that remedial measures are being taken in the girls' hostel.

Water board mulls laying new pipeline to supply treated water to Peenya Industrial Area

If the separate pipeline to supply treated water is implemented, it will be the first such initiative in the country, says BWSSB chairman Ram Prasath Manohar

WATER WOES

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is considering laying separate pipelines to supply treated water to industries in the city. In the first phase, BWSSB is likely to start the initiative by supplying treated water to Peenya Industrial Area, which has over 15,000 industrial units.

During a meeting held with industrialists, Peenya Industry Association members, Federation of Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FKCCI) members, and others, V. Ram Prasath Manohar, chairman of BWSSB said the board is planning to lay a separate pipeline to supply treated water to Peenya Industrial Area. Mr. Manohar claimed, if implemented, this will be the first such initiative in the country.

President of the Peenya Industrial Association said BWSSB convened a meeting with them in the first week of March and ensured adequate water supply to the industrial area even amidst the water crisis. FILE PHOTO

Divulging data, Mr. Manohar said, in Bengaluru 1,480 MLD wastewater is generated every day and currently, 1,212 MLD is treated at various plants. "At present, several programmes have already been launched to utilise the treated water. To reduce dependency on Cauvery water, the installation of a pipeline is planned to supply water to industrial area at Peenya. There are about 15,000 units in this industrial area," he said.

Arif H.M., president, the Peenya Industrial Association, said that BWSSB had convened a meeting with them in the first week of March and ensured adequate water supply to the Peenya Industrial Area even amidst the water crisis and this had helped them tide over the crisis.

BWSSB told to take precautionary measures to contain diseases

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has written to the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) to take precautionary measures to contain contagious diseases like cholera emerging during summer.

The BBMP has directed the BWSSB officials to ensure chlorination level in water treatment units and collect water distribution samples as prescribed in the rules.

In a letter written by BBMP Special Commissioner (Health), Suralkar Vikas Kishor asked BWSSB to collect samples from manholes and sewage in the underground drainage in areas where waterborne diseases are reported. On the other hand, the officials have to immediately attend to fix leakages in the water pipes. The letter was written in view of detection of Cholera cases in the city.

V. Ram Prasath Manohar, chairman, BWSSB said that they were maintaining chlorination levels in the water treatment plants and any contamination could be local. "We are vigilant and are responding to any complaints of leakage immediately. There are chances of contamination in cases of illegal connections, which also we will take up a drive to check," he said. He added that in the cholera case reported in a paying guest accommodation in Malleswharam, the said PG did not have a water connection from BWSSB, and the suspected cases in Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI) are suspected to be due to food poisoning, but BWSSB surveillance and preventive measures were on.

Nirmala perhaps deliberately confusing SDRF and NDRF: CM

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Rebutting the statement of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman that financial relief to disasters was the ambit of the State government, using the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) to which the Union Government had released funds in time, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who also holds charge of Finance Department, said the argument was a "blatant lie" aimed to confuse people.

"Funds under SDRF are allocated every year and this is shared between the Centre and the State in the ratio of 75:25. SDRF is used for routine disaster relief.

> Drought in Karnataka is unprecedented with 225 out of 250 taluks being declared as affected by it. The money available under SDRF is not sufficient to provide for crop failure on over 48 lakh hectares
>
> **SIDDARAMAIAH**
> Chief Minister

When the scale of the disaster is large, a memorandum is submitted to the Centre for funds under NDRF. Drought in Karnataka is unprecedented with 225 out of 250 taluks declared drought affected. The money available under SDRF is not sufficient to provide for crop failure of over 48 lakh hectares belonging to 34 lakh farmers. For providing relief for crop loss as per the norms we need ₹4,663 crores," he said. "We have been judicious in utilizing SDRF funds, especially in combating drought conditions. Yet, with drought-induced damages escalating beyond ₹37,000 crore, our plea for additional support of ₹18,171 crore from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) seems to be falling on deaf ears," he said. "The Finance Minister is perhaps deliberately confusing the two distinct funds," he added.

'Passenger Satisfaction Survey' from Monday

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has announced a 'Passenger Satisfaction Survey' from April 8 to May 6. A private firm Comet Nova will conduct the survey aimed at enhancing the commuter experience on Namma Metro.

BMRCL has issued press note in this regard on Saturday. The survey is conducted in both English and Kannada languages.

For more info, passengers can contact BMRC at travelhelp@bmrc.co.in or call 1800- 425-12345.

It's worrying that Bengaluru is suffering from drinking water crisis, says Nirmala

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

Addressing a press conference at the BJP media office in Bengaluru on Saturday, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said: "It is worrying and sad that the global city of Bengaluru is suffering from a drinking water crisis."

"More worrying is that there seems to also be an outbreak of cholera in the city. When there is a drinking water crisis, chances of contaminated water reaching people is also more. We often think we have eradicated some diseases. But it is sad to see a global city like Bengaluru suffer from this," she said.

She blamed many irrigation and drinking water initiatives being halted by the Congress government when it came to power in 2023.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman addressing the press conference in Bengaluru on Saturday. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

"Chief Minister Siddaramaiah halted works worth ₹20,000 crore in the state including water and irrigation works. Even Jal Jeevan Mission works which bring drinking water to every house have been stalled," she said.

Pourakarmikas grapple with heat this summer, demand half day work

BEATING THE HEAT

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

Fifty-year-old Lakshmi, a pourakarmika working in J.P. Nagar, now takes multiple beaks to sit under the shade as she feels lightheaded sweeping the streets even in morning hours.

The sweltering heat is making it difficult for her to work, especially between 11 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. In the summer, the civic workers have more work as trees shed leaves. "With roads reflecting heat and hot wind, it is becoming increasingly impossible to work this summer," said Ms. Lakshmi. As a committed worker, she has a reputation for sweeping the roads to ensure no single leaf is left unswept. But she is now unable to keep up. Sourcing water is another task, she said.

Rangamma, another pourakarmika from ward number 71 (Hegganahalli), said drinking water had become a big issue. "We do not find water so easily. A few residents give water, but how many times can we ask?" she asked.

In the summer, the civic workers in Bengaluru have more work as trees shed leaves. FILE PHOTO

Constant headache is another problem faced by the civic workers. Due to the sun beating down, the workers are experiencing dizziness, headache and burning sensation on the skin. A few wear caps, but many don't.

Nirmala M., president of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Pourakarmikara Sangha, talking to *The Hindu*, said it is unfortunate to see that BBMP is not arranging adequate drinking water for the workers. At each mustering points, BBMP should set up drums to store potable water for the workers to fill the bottles.

"In some areas, the residents do not provide drinking water to the pourakarmikas citing that they have come under the direct payment of BBMP and they can afford drinking water bottles. This is inhumane. We cannot afford to buy water," she said.

Pourakarmikas are expected to work between 6.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. and have no weekly off in most cities, even as Karnataka State Disaster Management Authority has issued an advisory to people of the State to beat the heat wave asking people to stay indoors between noon and 3 p.m., a memorandum by All India Central Council of Trade Unions which has multiple pourakarmika unions attached to it points out. The Union has now demanded that the State government immediately announce half-day work with weekly off, without any pay deductions. "Additional breaks should be provided to pourakarmikas during their work hours. We also demand that drinking water, ORS, and buttermilk be given to them daily. They should also be provided eye-shades, caps/hats, umbrella, and other necessary types of equipment to protect them from heat," the memorandum submitted to the Urban Development Department and Department of Municipal Administration said, also demanding a meeting with all stakeholders to discuss other measures that need to be taken. buttermilk be given to them daily. They should also be provided eye-shades, caps/hats, umbrella, and other necessary types of equipment to protect them from heat," the memorandum submitted to the Urban Development Department and Department of Municipal Administration said, also demanding a meeting with all stakeholders to discuss other measures that need to be taken in this regard.

706 IIMB students graduate with eight winning gold medals

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Anant Ashutosh Sharma emerged as the topper in the Postgraduate Programme in Management (PGP 2022-24) at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB), followed by Aditya Nishith Shah.

Jayant Ramchandra Yadav won the Best All-Round Performer Award with a gold medal in PGP and Postgraduate Programme in Business Analytics. All the achievers were felicitated with gold medals and degrees at the 49th convocation of IIMB, which was held on Saturday on their campus. In the PG Programme in Enterprise Management (PGPEM) course, P. Govind N. Shenoy got the first rank with a gold medal, and Rawat Megha Vijay Singh got the Best All-Round Performer Award with a gold medal.

In the Executive Postgraduate Programme in Management (EPGP-2023-24), Renu Chaubey secured the first rank with a gold medal, and Velamuri Sai Yaswanth won the Best All-Round Performer Award with a gold medal.

Some of the students who graduated from the IIM Bangalore on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In his convocation address, T.V. Narendran, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Tata Steel, said, "The Golden Jubilee year is a milestone year for IIM Bangalore, an institute that is sure to have many more milestones. This is the time for you all to reflect on the changes happening around the globe in the last few decades and what is in store in the next few decades." A total of 706 students from various programmes – including 22 from the Doctoral Programme, 78 from the Postgraduate Programme in Enterprise Management, 76 from the Executive Postgraduate Programme in Management, 47 from the Postgraduate Programme in Business Analytics, and 483 from the Postgraduate Programme in Management – were awarded degrees.

Deadline for installing aerators extended till Apr. 30

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has, for the second time, extended the deadline for installing aerators at malls, commercial complexes, apartments, religious spaces, government buildings, luxury hotels and other establishments.

As per the new deadline, aerators should be installed before April 30. The earlier deadline was April 7. The extension was given following public demand. The first deadline for the installation was March 31.

On the other hand, in places where a large amount of water is being used, the BWSSB will, on priority, install aerators. The users should pay the price of installation, labour, and the device when they pay the upcoming bill. The BWSSB has already installed aerators at several government offices, including Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, Bangalore Development Authority, and others.

Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder

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Scan the QR code to register your feedback

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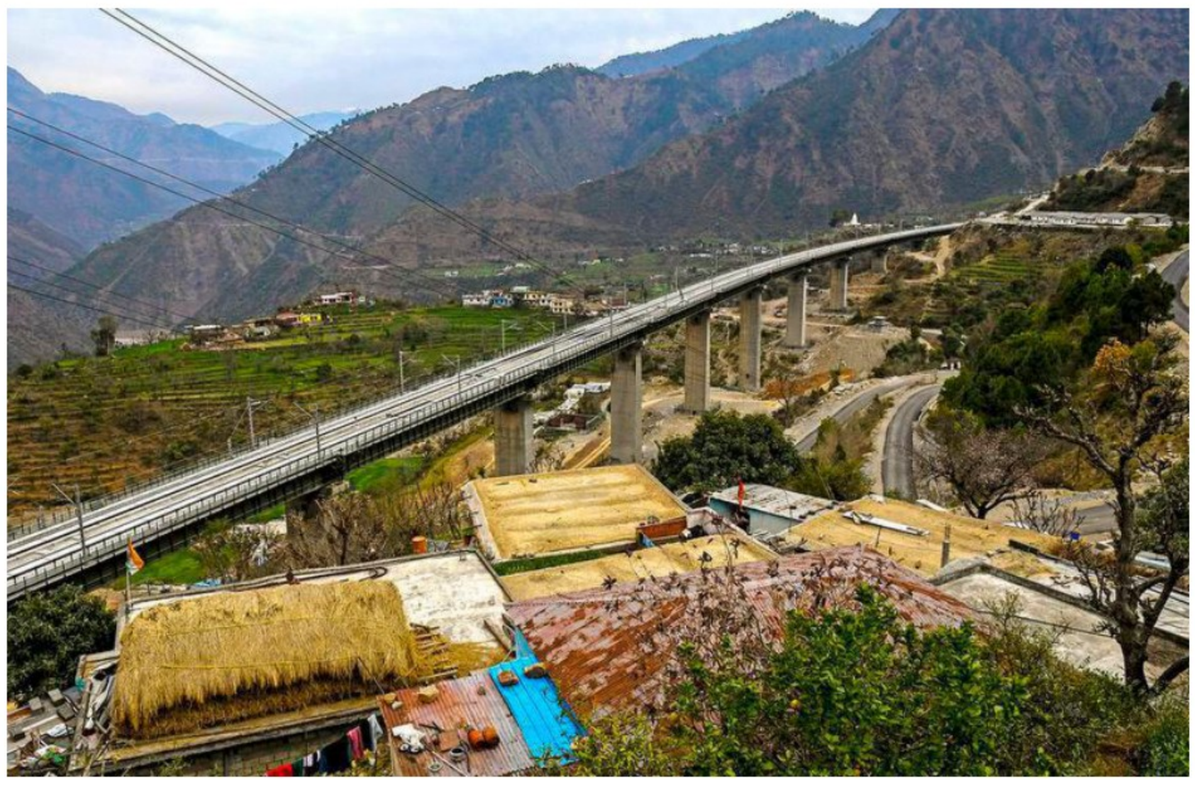
FRONTLINE SPORTSTAR THE HINDU Young world THE HINDU

Architectural marvel: The newly constructed Chenab Bridge, which is the world's highest rail arch bridge at 359 metres.



Long journey: The bridge on the Bakkal side in Reasi district.

Meeting point: The tunnel leading to the newly constructed Chenab Bridge.

Finishing up: A construction worker on the cable-stayed Anji Bridge.

Bridging mountains: The Anji Bridge, supported by 96 cables, is strong enough for trains running at speeds of up to 100 kmph.

Tejasvi Surya emerges top performer among Bengaluru city MPs

According to the data shared by the B.PAC, Surya leads the chart, having asked 382 questions in the Lok Sabha. In spending MPLADS too, Surya tops the chart, spending ₹19.36 crore

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Having posed the highest number of questions in the 15 Parliament sessions held during the 17th Lok Sabha and spent more funds granted under Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), Member of Parliament (MP) from Bengaluru South, Tejasvi Surya, has topped performance among three Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MPs in Bengaluru city, revealed an analysis by Bangalore Political Action Committee (B.PAC).

In the 17th Lok Sabha, the lower house worked for 273 days, and P.C. Mohan, Bengaluru Central MP, is ahead of others with 82% attendance. While Mr. Surya's attendance is 78%, Bengaluru North MP D.V. Sadanand Gowda's participation is 100 days out of 159 days which is 63%. For Mr. Gowda, the total days are calculated at 159 as he served as Union Cabinet Minister from May 30, 2019, to July 7, 2021, when Ministers did not sign the attendance register in Lok Sabha. The national average attendance of MPs is 79%, and the State average is 71%.

According to the data shared by the B.PAC, Mr. Surya is leading the chart, asking 382 questions in Parliament. Mr. Mohan is lagging behind a little, with 182 questions. Shockingly, Mr. Gowda, who was the former Chief Minister of Karnataka and an ordinary member like the other two for nearly three years during the 2021-2024 period, did not ask a single question in the House.

Tejasvi Surya

P.C. Mohan

Attendance

Name	Total days	Days present	Percentage
P.C. Mohan	273	224	82
Tejasvi Surya	273	212	78
D.V. Sadananda Gowda*	159	100	63

Questions

Name	Total questions asked
Tejasvi Surya	382
P.C. Mohan	189
D.V. Sadananda Gowda*	0

*D.V. Sadananda Gowda, MP, Bengaluru North, was a Union Cabinet Minister from May 30, 2019, to July 7, 2021. Ministers represent the government in debates; hence, they do not sign the attendance register, ask questions, or introduce private member Bills.

Utilisation of MPLAD funds

Name	Funds utilised
Tejasvi Surya	₹19.36 crore
D.V. Sadananda Gowda	₹18.69 crore
P.C. Mohan	₹17.79 crore

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, MPLADS was suspended from April 6, 2020, to November 9, 2021, and no funds were allocated for the scheme for FY 2020-21. For FY 2021-22, i.e., from November 10, 2021 to March 31, 2022, ₹2 crore was allocated under the scheme for each Member of Parliament.

The data also show that in total, three Bengaluru city MPs have spent ₹55.88 crore under the MPLAD scheme. The MPs spent the highest amount of funds, ₹23.47 crore, on public infrastructure development. The elected representatives spent ₹16.03 crore on drinking water and sanitation and ₹7.27 crore on education. These three areas saw the biggest spending from MPLADS funds.

In terms of MPLADS spending, Mr. Surya has topped the chart, spending ₹19.36 crore.

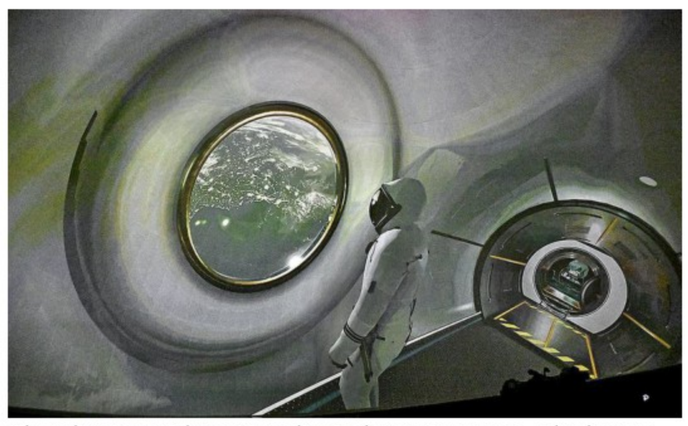
The Assembly constituencies that received the most funding are Basavanagudi (₹4.33 crore) and Jayanagar (₹4.32 crore). Mr. Gowda has spent ₹18.69 crore, and the Yeshvantpur constituency received ₹6 crore. Mr. Mohan's total spending is pegged at ₹17.79 crore, and the highest fund of ₹3.73 crore is spent on the Chamarajpet Assembly segment.

It must be noted that ₹5 crore per year is allocated to each MP for 5 years. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, MPLADS was suspended from April 6, 2020, to November 9, 2021. This means no funds were allocated for the Financial Year 2020-21. For the Financial Year 2021-2022, ₹2 crore was allocated. This means in the five years, the total allocated fund for each MP stands at ₹17 crore. However, more spending shown in the data is due to the utilisation of unutilised funds in the previous Lok Sabha tenure.

Revathy Ashok, Honorary Managing Trustee, B.PAC, said, "B.PAC has been analysing elected representatives' participation and MPLADS utilisation for Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies since 2014. We undertake this work to bring elected representatives (MPs/MLAs) 5 years of work during the office to citizens and voters to make informed choices."

New 30-minute sky theatre show on Gaganyaan at JNP

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU


'The Indian Space Odyssey' Sounding Rockets to Gaganyaan, a sky show on Gaganyaan mission will be open to public viewing at Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium in Bengaluru from Sunday. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium (JNP) has launched a new sky theatre show Indian Odyssey: Sounding Rockets to Gaganyaan.

The 30-minute sky show which will be open to the public from Sunday, deliberates on the human thirst for spaceflight, its realisation, progress, and the current status of human spaceflight at a global level. It also traces the genesis and evolution of the Indian space programme and its various achievements.

"Finally, through a conspicuous visual treat, it discusses the training of astronauts, giant Human rated LVM3 launch vehicle, and the Gaganyaan spacecraft, their meticulous preparation for the launch, and the way Indian astronauts will undertake their exciting journey to orbit Gaganyaan spacecraft and safely return," JNP stated.

It added that animations of the various elements of Gaganyaan projected onto the sky dome are the main highlight of the show. The Gaganyaan programme aims to send Indian astronauts to a 400 km orbit around the Earth, enable them to orbit the Earth there in their Gaganyaan spacecraft for three days and bring them back safely. Four astronauts Group Captains Prashanth Balakrishnan Nair, Ajith Krishnan, Angad Pratap, and Wing Commander Subhansh Shukla have been selected for the Gaganyaan mission.

JNP Director Dr. B.R. Guruprasad said that the sky show would be conducted daily for the next two months (except Mondays and second Tuesday which are holidays).

The show timings are 10.30 a.m. (English) and 11.30 a.m. (Kannada). JNP said that 150 seats are available for online booking through the BookMyShow website and the remaining 50 seats will be issued at the ticket counter half an hour before the commencement of the show.

Chain-snatching gang busted

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Annapoorneshwari Nagar police on Saturday busted a gang of chain snatchers run by a 32-year-old woman with two minors, including her son.

The accused, Roja of Chintamani, working as a labourer took to crime after her minor son aged 17 years was caught by the police for a series of robbery cases in and around Bengaluru.

According to the police, the accused son and his associates who were involved in over 12 mobile snatchings, robberies, and extortion cases were caught and remanded to the State Home for Boys. After his release, Roja roped in her son and his associates and allegedly hatched a plan for chain snatching. As per the plan, she would visit parks and residential areas to keep a watch on elderly women going on walks regularly, police alleged. After observing their movement, Roja would alert her son to rob their gold chains and escape on a scooter. The accused was arrested while she was trying to sell the robbed gold valuables at a pawn shop. Based on the tip-off, a team of police led by Inspector A.V. Kumar rushed to the spot and caught Roja, and subsequently detained her son and his associates for questioning. With their arrest, the police have cracked five chain-snatching cases reported in Kengeri, RR Nagar, and Annapoorneshwari Nagar station, Mr. Kumar said.

After scrutiny at Bengaluru South, EC finds nominations of 300 candidates valid in State

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Following the final scrutiny of the 492 sets of nominations by 358 candidates for the first of the two-phase Lok Sabha polls in Karnataka, polling for which will be held on April 26, the Election Commission has found the nominations of 300 candidates to be valid.

On Friday, the EC had adjourned the scrutiny of the nominations filed by 34 candidates in Bengaluru South to Saturday, following a dispute. After the scrutiny on Saturday, 35 of the 49 nominations in Bengaluru South have been accepted. "As many as 24 of the 35 candidates are valid. With this, a total of 419 of the 492 nominations have been accepted," stated a release from the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka.

The final number of candidates who will be in fray for the April 26 polling will be known after April 8, which is the last date for withdrawal of candidature

The final number of candidates who will be in fray for the April 26 polling will be known after April 8, which is the last date for withdrawal of candidature.

Meanwhile, the total seizures made by the Election Commission since March 16, when the model code of conduct (MCC) came into force in Karnataka, crossed ₹262 crore on Saturday. This includes cash, liquor, drugs, and precious metals.

Probe against unknown Facebook account holder

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The cybercrime police have registered an FIR against a social media account for posting objectionable post against Ashwini Puneet Rajkumar in a demeaning manner. Based on the complaint filed by Anjaneya T., a resident of Kurubarahalli, the police charged the accused under various sections of IT Act, 2000 on Friday.

According to the complaint, Anjaney said that Ms. Ashwini had attended the unboxing event of RCB cricket team held on March 19. The accused under the account name Gaja Pade blamed Ashwini Puneeth Rajkumar for the team losing in subsequent IPL matches using unparliamentary language in a demeaning manner. The accused soon changed his profile stating that he is a fan of the film actor (Sudeep) which is to create a hatred among two fan groups, Mr. Anjaneya said.

Two cars destroyed in fire

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Two cars were destroyed in an accidental fire that broke out near the garbage dump in Nandini layout on Friday night.

The incident occurred near the water tank when a roadside garbage dump caught fire.

According to the fire officials, someone had accidentally ignited the fire which spread to the vehicles parked nearby because of the wind. Soon fire engulfed two cars parked and passers-by rushed to help and alerted the fire control room before trying to douse the fire.

A fire tender rushed to the spot and put out the fire before it could spread to the other vehicles.

प्लाज़्मा अनुसंधान संस्थान
INSTITUTE FOR PLASMA RESEARCH
भाट, इन्दिरा पुल के निकट, गांधीनगर – 382428 (भारत)
Bhat, Near Indira Bridge, Gandhinagar – 382 428 (India)
Web: www.ipr.res.in

विज्ञापन सं /ADVT. NO. 4/2024

प्लाज़्मा अनुसंधान संस्थान पीएच.डी. (भौतिक) -2024 के लिए आवेदन आमंत्रित करता है
IPR INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR Ph.D. in (PHYSICS) -2024

प्लाज़्मा अनुसंधान संस्थान (आईपीआर), परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग, भारत सरकार के अंतर्गत एक प्रमुख वैज्ञानिक अनुसंधान संस्थान है, जो भाट गाँव, गांधीनगर, गुजरात में स्थित है। जीआईडीसी, गांधीनगर, गुजरात में औद्योगिक प्लाज़्मा प्रौद्योगिकी सुविधा केंद्र (FCIPT) और गुवाहटी, असम में प्लाज़्मा भौतिकी केंद्र (CPP) में इसकी प्रयोगशालाओं का विस्तार हैं। आईपीआर मूलभूत प्लाज़्मा भौतिकी, चुंबकीय परिरोध संलयन और प्लाज़्मा के तकनीकी अनुप्रयोग के लिए अनुसंधान और विकास गतिविधियों में शामिल है। प्रयोगात्मक, कम्प्यूटेशनल और सैद्धांतिक प्लाज़्मा भौतिकी में डॉक्टरेट अनुसंधान करने के लिए अत्यधिक प्रेरित छात्रों से आवेदन आमंत्रित किए जाते हैं।

Institute for Plasma Research (IPR), located at Bhat Village, Gandhinagar, Gujarat is a premier scientific research institute under the Department of Atomic Energy, Govt. of India. IPR also has extension laboratories at the Facilitation Center for Industrial Plasma Technologies (FCIPT) in GIDC, Gandhinagar, Gujarat and at the Center for Plasma Physics (CPP) at Guwahati, Assam. IPR is involved in research and development activities devoted to basic plasma physics, magnetic confinement fusion and technological application of plasmas. Applications are invited from highly motivated students to pursue doctoral research in experimental, computational and theoretical plasma physics.

इच्छुक उम्मीदवार विस्तृत विज्ञापन, पात्रता मानदंड और आवेदन प्रक्रिया के लिए वेबसाइट http://www.ipr.res.in/documents/jobs_career.html (विज्ञापन सं. 4/2024) पर जा सकते हैं।

Interested candidates may visit the website http://www.ipr.res.in/documents/jobs_career.html (ADVT. NO. 4/2024) for detailed Advertisement, eligibility criteria and application procedure.

ऑनलाइन आवेदन लिंक 8 अप्रैल 2024 को सुबह 10:00 बजे सक्रिय हो जाएगा। ऑनलाइन आवेदन भरने की अंतिम तिथि 30 अप्रैल 2024 (शाम 05:00 बजे) है।

Online application link will be activated on 8th April 2024 at 10:00 AM. The last date for filling online application is 30th April 2024 (05:00 PM).

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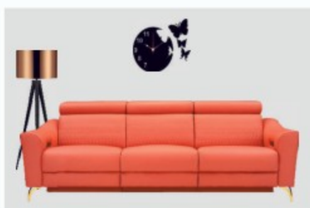
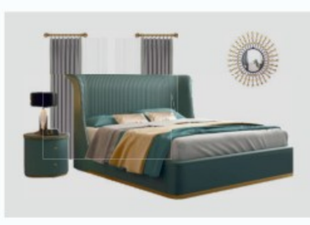

LIVING ROOM SET

DINING ROOM SET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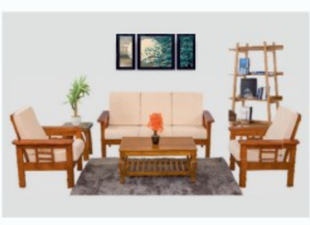
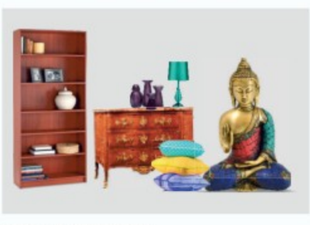

SHEESHAM FURNITURE

WOODEN CARVED FURNITURE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COSMOPOLITAN

ARYAVYSYA, 28Y, 5ft 5inch, DM Neurology, very beautiful bride seeks suitable groom, Jayasimha Parinaya Vedika, Whatsapp.9000803380

DEFENCE

25/ 58/ 165 Gavara Naidu girl BA LLB based at Secunderabad ready to relocate invites matches preferably from defence background officers. Contact email sivakumarr.kumar2@gmail.com

DOCTOR

DOCTOR GIRL 30/156 MBBS MD General Medicine, seeks Doctors/ suitable grooms 9447493034, 9497168001

VANNIAR, AFFLUENT Family (Divorce) aged 33 years, Dr. MS (O&G) seeks same profession bridegroom, sub caste no bar. Call : 98941 34981

NAIDU/MBC 24/ 167 Fair,MBBS,Avittam, Makaram,both parents doctors, own hospital seeks M.S/M.D clinical doctor groom from affluent/doctor family TN/Pondy contact :6380069015 / 9790288125.

SC AD, 30 yrs, MBBS, Doctor, working in NHS, UK, Hastham, Kanni seeks groom preferably in UK. 9003017072

INTERCASTE (NAIDU– SC) 30/F doctor divorced no child. Wanted Groom – TN/ 30's/ divorced no child/ Caste no bar. Ph: 9442145470

TAMIL HINDU SC AD 32year Doctor MBBS, DCH, DNB (Pediatrics) working in Pondicherry seeking suitable groom Contact: 9443634719

PARENTS OF Obs & Gynaecologist MBBS MS FMAS (OBG) 32/ 156 Gavara Naidu invite alliance from suitable groom doctors/ business/ EX service CNB 9159150101 / doctorrgm@ Gmail.com

MUDALIAR DR. Subashree Balakrishnan MBBS / Doctor Age 32 Ayilyam/ Kadagam sks Doctor Groom only 9176514141

MCH FY 29, Rohini, 5ft 8inch saiva pillai seek DM/ MD/ MTECH/ CA veg groom from Chennai. 6383189302

MD(ANAES) 36Y 165cms 60kgs Fair Chettiar/Caste No Bar, well settled in Chennai seeks well settled Doctor groom from Chennai 9345049563

GROOM WANTED
Hindu Reddy
November 1990 / 165 cms, Doctor (Surgeon) MBBS, MS, Fair, Slim, Well Settled Seeks Suitable Groom from Chennai. Caste No Bar.
Call: 89256 40111

KANNADA

HINDU VOKKALIGA Gowda 29, BE from Coimbatore seeks Suitable Groom. Contact: 97917 68175.

MALAYALAM

ACCOMPLISHED GROOM sought for a beautiful girl (26), hailing from an aristocratic Malayali Menon family, U.S. citizen, Doctor from one of the top Medical Schools in the world, currently based in Boston. Language, caste no bar. Please reply to menonappa@gmail.com with all details, including date, time, and place of birth

HINDU – SC Girl: 37/157, Agri -Scientist - (CG-Pune) from south Kerala, seeks alliance from well educated professionals. Contact: 7972420241, 9447296008

NRI

SMART, FAIR, Slim, Punjabi Girl Khatri–Arora 33/5ft 1inch BTech. Wrkg as Soft Developer in Canada, Canadian Groom Required. 9417180222 nitin.bhatia151@gmail.com

TAMIL

Govt Doctor M.D 37yrs, never married Fair, seeks RC/ CSI Christian Groom Doctor,Engr 9444808870/ 8072910380

RC 34/ 165 MDS Associate Prof Dental college Chennai seeks PG Drs/ Engr/ IT Caste no bar Cont 9444157888

CHRISTIAN NADAR: Girl– 27, MBBS, DCH, Seeks Doctors / or Any Suitable Other Professionals Ok: 93635 70731

CHRISTIAN 28/165 Born again good looking MS employed IT Canada seeks Godfearing Christian well educated employed groom in Canada/ US/ Australia/ Gulf. Caste no bar. 9600056955

TAMIL MUSLIM Girl B.E 37 fair slim seeks qualified, employed, Never married Muslim. 9444235779

TAMIL

HINDU DEVAR 39Yrs B.Com MBA 1st marriage seeks suitable Groom from FC/BC caste only. CT: 9442001440.

B.Tech (IT) MBA (IIM-C) Tamil/Telugu Chettiar girl 33/170 AGM/MNC seeks suitable Edu Groom CNB 8300665039

HINDU SAMBAVAR Girl fair 35/163cm graduate State government employee 50 Thousand Salary. Seeks Suitable Bridegroom Contact: 7845213551

IYER– VADAMA, Bharadwaja Gothram, 31Y, Fair, 5ft. M.S.(IT), working in MNC (UK), seeking groom in the UK. Ct – 9884024668/ 9080512589

SC ARUNTHATHIYAR Thiruvathirai 9-9-1985 MSc employed 1st Marriage seeks groom. CNB. Ct:9150331377

TAMIL Yadava CNB - A Business family from Ooty wants Groom for their Daughter 25 Years very Fair Bachelor in Fashion Designing Sadayam - Kumbam Business / Family from Yadava/Pillai/Mudaliar.CT:9443115000

EMPLOYED QUALIFIED bridegrooms is wanted for SC/AD/MSC/DB 1983/ Vishakam ,Dhulam bride 9445755194

HINDU SC AD 28 yrs MBA Chennai Bride seeks same community Chennai qualified employed below 34 yrs Life partner groom. Ct 7338901952 Whatsapp

AGAMUDAIYAR : 26y, Fair, Caste No Bar, MBBS, DCH. Seeks Doctor ok. Any Other Suitable Groom – Chennai / Any Dist : 7824023030

HINDU MARUTHUVAR 30/159cm CA Auditor Fair Legally Divorced Seeks Groom Caste No Bar 8667868854

NAIDU, 50YRS, Beautiful, Unmarried, employed seeks suitable Groom. Age/ Caste No Bar. Ct: 7092569171.

HINDU NADAR Nellai 1990 155cm 1st Marriage MCA Chithirai Kanni IT Job, Seeks Well Qualified, Good Job Bride Groom from Same Caste 9943913513

GROOM WANTED Elite Mudaliyar, 25yrs, MA(HRM), Own Textile business in Chennai. Ct: 9710093999/ 9710091999

HINDU VANNIYAR 26/165cm, B.COM, CA, Elite Family, well settled. Seeks Suitable Groom, CNB. Ct: 9047192999

HINDU GROOM with moral values for well to do Mudaliar girl BE/ 28y/ 155cm working at Bengaluru. Ct: 7975421774

NADAR PRETTY Girl Rich Family Diverse No Child Seeks Groom 36–38/5–6ft income 1/L Chennai Only 9940456098

45,BA HINDU Divorcee,2 Children Very Fair.Seeks Below 50yrs Good Family Back Ground Chennai . 9025791355

34yrs BA Govt. Bank employee seeks Govt Job groom age upto 37, caste no bar. Ct: 9597061541

MUDALIAR: 25/ V. Fair & Beautiful, B. Tech, Accenture, Sr. Analyst, Bangalore, Rs.1200000 PA, Well settled Family – Seeks groom India / Abroad – 8925019776

HINDU NADAR 33/5'6" MBA working Chennai Elite Family Seeks qualified Groom working in Chennai. 9962991972

PILLAI 29/165 BE MBA(IIM) Fair good-looking girl Uthirattathi BIG4 consulting Chennai looking for groom with similar qualifications. Ct: 7358116081, arusubbu508@gmail.com

AGE 48, PhD, Central Government, never married, good looking, wheatish bride seeks never married, employed groom below 50 years from decent family background. Serious inquiries only; Contact: 9443553063

B.TECH(NIT) MBA(IIM) Product Cnsltnt DKV girl 30/161 Sks suitbl edu groom Caste/Relign/L Nobar 9445687535

HINDU SC MBBS Doctor Age 27 Uthiram–I/Simmam seeks suitable employed & qualified bridegroom Ph 9500182723

MAY 94/167 fair SC/PL BE , TCS Chennai, Parents Hindu/CSI. Seeks GroomDr/Er, Govt Employee. 8056143638

BRIDEGROOM WANTED
SENGUNTHA MUDALIAR,
26 Yrs. 155 cms, B.Tech., MBA., Fair and Slim, Into father's Business, Family is financially well off. Looking for affluent family match, preferably in around Pondicherry.
9443469444

BRIDES WANTED

BUSINESS

AGE 37 Handsome, Comfortable Groom needs VIP Girl and first Marriage, Remarriage, Divorce. Ct: 7401489892

COSMOPOLITAN

✔ **ROMAN CATHOLIC/29/180 cms/ BE/ MS/ Based in Sweden. Looking for a professionally qualified girl 24 – 29 yrs. Contact via Email: sjm.val7@gmail.com / Mob: 9923884686**

Looking for Alliance for Son, 32, Working in MNC, Resident of Bangalore, 6'1", MBA, IYER. Bride needed from decent,Brahmin Educated Family. Email: mattmatrimonial@gmail.com

BRIDE WANTED
Kerala Christian 40 B.Tech. Now own business in hospitality Sector in kerala and agriculture Settled in Mysore is Looking for a suitable match girl Should be between 28 to 33, and graduate with a positive mind set (Religion Caste and language No bar) interest in agriculture will be an added advantage parents who value family relation may please contact
Mobile: 9844181640

GAVARA, 28Y, Jr. Doctor in Delhi AIIMS, Very handsome Groom seeks suitable bride, Jayasimha Parinaya Vedika, Whatsapp.9000803380

BOY DIVORCED, 47yrs, Coimbatore, 6ft 4inch BE, 24 manai 8 vedu, 1.5lac/month, 9444105080, caste no bar,

DIVORCEE

COIMBATORE, 41/155CMS, employed in MNC expecting educated girl preferably from Coimbatore Surroundings. No interest in horoscope, caste no bar. Call: 98431 69594, 94430 60030

SUNDARAM BALAJI, Mudhaliyar, Chennai, DOB: 23.01.1982, height 168 cms, clean habits, Pooradam / Dhanusu, working as HR Manager 10 Lakhs P.A, Legally Divorced. Contact : 9551069123

40 Y /176 cm /77kgs Fair, Hindu/ Tamil Chettiar/Caste No Bar, Legal Consultant Chennai well settled Seeks well educated bride 9840234030

Bangalore based Own Business 52 / 173 cm Naidu - Brahmin Intercaste Father of 2 Girls : 22 Employed. 16 having Special Needs. seeks Divorcee / Widow 36 to 45 yrs. Caste No Bar. WhatsApp 95382 98649. Email: Pvrjmb@gmail.com

✔ **Looking for** Hindu veg life partner around 40 yrs, for a divorcee man of 50 yrs settled MNC chennai. Contact: 9840211389.

DOCTOR

ELITE MUDALIAR Parents seeking non working (or ready to be full time house wife) bride for their only son, (doctor, 30), write to parents mail: msmm592@rediffmail.com .

HINDU NADAR, 26/165cm, MBBS (ENT), working in UK. Seeks Suitable Bride Ct: K.Raman Nadar 9380791999

DOCTOR

1985/175CM, 50 Lakhs PA, Never Married, Hyderabad. WhatsApp: 96290 12248

KAMMA
Pursuing MD Radiology Chennai Mrugasira 174 cms 50c 9.9.93 very fair & cultured, seeking alliance from PG KAMMA DOCTOR BRIDES only.
✆: 9396366200

HINDI

BANIYA Caste 28 / 6' Smart looking Technology Analyst B'lore Seeks Well Educated & Homely Girl. 9894321656, 8012050841.

KANNADA

WANTED BRIDE in 40Yrs, entrepreneur, unmarried, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada & English knowledge for our son aged 54 Years. Mb-9449817937

MALAYALAM

BRIDES WANTED
Kerala Brahmin (Nambisan) age 37, Film Maker B.Sc., Visual Communications MFA Newyork University, TISCH School of Arts, Singapore. Currently working for Amazon Prime and Gayathri Cinemas as Director, Editor for new Projects, 5feet 10inches, Vegetarian, Handsome, Teetotaler with Good Family Values. Family Settled in Chennai for 50 years, seeking Kerala or Tamil Brahmin, Educated, Compassionate Bride between 24-34 years.
Contact: 9444067776
Email: hariharan.gce@gmail.com

NRI

NAIDU 29/180CM, Pooratathi, BTech MS, Working as Research Engr, PR of Sweden, Contact Parent 9566682220

TAMIL

PILLAI NV 39/165 Uthiradam Makaram BE MBA project manager IT Chennai 18 LPA divorcee (marriage not consummated) seeks tamil bride 30 to 36 yrs unmarried divorcee without issue employed in IT/BANK/Govt cast no bar.6385607722 / 9283736478

TAMIL IYER Vadama Boy Uthiram May 1996 born, Toronto–based, 28 yrs, 5ft 10inch Software Engineer. Boy Visiting Delhi on March 31. Contact +16478869280 Chander.krishnamurthy@gmail.com.

BRIDE WANTED Hindu Nadar 39yrs/ 170 c.m / M.Sc.,B.Ed / PGT /Govt / contact no: 9494003635

MUDALIAR PARENTS invite Alliance for their Smart Looking Son 29 / 172 / B.E.(Aero) / Sharjah / 2.00L pm seeks Well Educated & Gud Looking Brides Subset No Bar 9962999136.

MUDALIYAR BOY age 35, Star: Rohini, fair complexion, Scale II officer in Nationalised bank seeks good looking girl from same caste or equal. Telugu kannada. matching star preferred. No other demands 9445311859

RC MUDALIAR 28 MBA 170 V. Fair Multimillionaire Seeks RC Own Factory Business V.VIP Family Caste No Bar Contact: 7550113468

TAMIL

TAMIL IYER Unmarried Bharad Wajam Pooradam-1. 39 years, B.Tech, Working in Bangalore Drawing Rs. 25 LPA, Looking for Suitably Qualified any South Indian Brahmin Girls. Whats-App: 9715717881 gvcs49@gmail.com

B.TECH,38,BUSINESS AFFLUENT,INTER-CASTE, Pooradam,Dhanusu @Chennai want Slim,Beautiful bride CNB,Prefer Dr,Engr/Any Deg 9840362628, 8925413491

✔ **PILLAI(KARUNEEGAR)**, DOB:24–01–92, BE, Veg, Job: MNC (Software) Chennai, Annual Income: 25 lakhs. Seeking a suitable bride from the same or any other community. Ph: 9841784047 Email: pingme.arul@gmail.com.

SC, 31Years, ME, Team Leader, 18Lacs PA. Seeks Any One Degree. Fair,Normal Family Ok. Ct:7824023030

KONGU VELLALAR, 36, 5.6, 61 kgs, SW. [Engg) (BE., M.S) working in USA, seeking bride. Caste no bar. There is a minor well managed health consideration that might require support on our path to parenthood. Happy to discuss. Ct. 8438688375.

AGE 46, 2nd Marriage, Working in Hospital at Qatar. Suitable Bride who willing to come Qatar. Ct: +97433840227 / 9498328263

PILLAI / SOZHIYA VELLALAR Non-Veg 34/174 BE MIB(France) Fair Boy Punarpoosam Business Analyst MNC Chennai.Seeks apt Bride 9597866978.

REMARRIAGE NAIDU 39, 5'6" BE MBA Pooram IBM Chennai seeks suitable Bride CNB. Geetham 9884858014

HINDU NADAR, 32/172cm, MBBS, MD or DNP, Own Hospital, Elite Family. Seeks Suitable Bride. Ct: 9380791999

HINDU/AD/ 31/ MS–IT Boy Software Australia. Seeks Suitable Alliance. Ct: 9884229468

CHENNAI BASED 36/177, MBA Hindu boy working in ICF (Central Govt) seeks working educated Hindu. Caste no bar (except SC/ST) Ct: 9382820178

MUDALIAR/ PILLAI, 29.05.93 / Poram Simman 183cm, BE, MS (USA) N.Veg, Working In USA, Seeks Suitable Bride (25–28yr) Studying / Working In USA. Caste No Bar Mob: 9003713942

PILLAI AGE 58 Business Divorce No Child Seek Age 42 to 45 Without Child Caste No Bar. dnvijay67@gmail.com

SC 29/B.E (EEE) Cent.Govt. Job(Southern Railway) 75,000 P.M. Seeks Bride Ph:9444993417 Whatsapp:7397674481

BE IIT 6'2 Height Mudaliar 32yrs Tech Lead Top MNC in Hyderabad Sal 75 lacs seeks Bride 5 '4 Same or Allied Castes Tamil,Telugu. Ct: 7382620365

TAMIL BRAHMIN Iyer 35yrs Male, Weighing Machine Business in Namakkal seeks Bride in same community. Divorcee / Widower also ok. 9738233431

Tamil Iyengar PQM for M.Tech data eng. 31 yrs / 180cm / chithirai / bharadwaj / parents intercaste marriage. Contact: 9300502792.

SINGLE 50 healthy, well settled need any Brahmin Bride except Bharadwaja Gothram. Divorcee, widow acceptable. Contact: Dr. Bala 8610578698

IYER/ BHARATWAJAM/ Vadamal/ Pooradam 1993/173/ PG/ Bangalore MNC, Good salary, Seeks Graduate working girl, Sub–sect no bar. Ct: 9444115657

BRAHMIN IYER VADULAM Uthiram Nov 1977 BSc (MCA) MNC, IT 24 Lacs PA Seek unmarried Brahmin Girl 9841071359

TAMIL

WANTED BRIDE
Brahmin,Iyer, Ashtasahasram,Kaushika, Age 31/174 cm/ Engineer with MBA in Corporate Finance(Canada), CFA candidate, Fair, Investor, Rich /Affluent Business Family seeks a Beautiful, Well Educated, Suitable Iyer Girl of 28 - 29 years from a good Family Background.
Phone: 9884043225/Whatsapp.

BRIDE WANTED
For
Tamil Brahmin
Divorcee and
issueless
Age 30, height 6.4"
Currently settled
in U.K.
Hails from affluent
business family.
Email :
bj1841994@gmail.com

Chettiar Unmarried 1983 /5.11 Btech MBA Manager 14 lakhs/PA seeks suitable Telugu / Tamil Alliance. Veg preferred.9444559768 /044-79609970

B.E, 37yrs 5.8 Pillai (Sozhiya Vellalar) Employed &Upper Middle Class Family Seeks Suitable Bride, Star: Swathi (Caste No Bar) Ct: 98432 52888.

SAIVA MUDALIAR Aug1984 Advocate and Industrialist seeks Graduate and Good Looking Bride. Any Vegetarian, Subsect NoBar. Ct: 74483 16569

34, AYILYAM, Hindu, ICWAI,MBA(IIM) Manager, SC, seeks Ragu Kethu Bride Chennai, Caste no bar. 96772 66232

Bride Wanted Mudaliyar 31yrs BS ME (US)Own Schools&Colleges Elite Business Family 9710093999/8939691888

SC(AD), 29YRS, B.Arch, Elite Business Family in Chennai. Seeks Suitable Bride. 9710093999 / 8939691888

Saiva pillai/ 28/180 Ahmedabad well educated employed elite groom seeks educated employed bride. 9442649298

Mudaliyar/ Pillai, 29/165cms, B.com, MSW, LLB Advocate, Chennai, well settled seeks educated working bride. Contact: 94450 77918 / 94444 95948.

Senguntha Mudaliar Divorcee BE, 34/165cm, Medical Wholesale. seeks suitable Bride CNB Ct: 8939691888

AGAMUDAYAR, B.E., 31yrs, 173cm, Pooradam, Fair, Software Engineer, 2 Lakhs per month seeks SWE/ BE/ Dr Bride. Ct: 6382086919, 8508099103

TELUGU

NAIDU 32 B.Tech IT PGDM HR Chennai Seeks Naidu(Any) Bride educated Dr/ CA/Engg & employed Cell: 9444753417

NAIDU 37/164CMS, 70kgs, BBA MBA working Chennai 7Lakhs PA, own house in native. Caste No Bar. 9894428574.

BRIDE WANTED Rich Naidu 28yrs MBBS, MS Own Hospitals Chennai, Elite Business Family 9710093999/ 9710091999

BALIJA 29/180 cms, BE/ M.S (Ger) working in Germany 51Lpa. Seeks Suitable Qualified Bride– Sub Sects No Bar. Ct: 9442623203 / 9442838203

KAMMA NAIDU,TELUGU, 27, 172cm, Fair, Visakam,Thulam,B.E, Chemical Engineer, Own Business, 5Lac/pm. Well Settled Family in Chennai. Seeks:Fair & Profesionaly Qualified Bride. Call: 9962518199, Email: sm@smsla.in

ELITE GAVARA NAIDU Family from Chennai,only Son having Business in Entire SouthIndia with good Networth 02/08/1999, 5.9,Meenam,Uttara tthee,Veryfair,Seeks Bride from Elite Family only(Sub sect ok)Ct:0–9444071701

BRIDE WANTED Rich Kamma Naidu, 27yrs,B.Tech, Elite Business Family in Chennai. Ct: 9710093999/ 9710091999

CHENNAI, BALIJA naidu, only son, with good net assets, 29yrs/5.5'/ BE,MS, own business, seeks well educated bride. Subsect no bar. Ct: 9840445567.

Kamma Naidu Tiruvonam/Magaram Divorcee BE 47yr/170 Pvt seeks widow &divorcee any Hindu:9790271078

RICH NAIDU, 26yrs, M.Tech (IIT), Elite Business family. Seeks Suitable Bride Cont: 9710093999/ 9710091999

NAIDU 32/180, Handsome,MBBS,MS, Associate Professor,3000000.PA,Elite Family, CNB. 9363986547,9363767415

NAIDU, KANNI/HASTHAM 07.01.1991/ B.Tech, IT,Software Engr. seeks Educated Girl Ct: 9361783287/ 9150851950

BRIDE WANTED
KAMMA NAIDU
40yrs, 174cm, MBA
Business Man, Rental Income Around 5Lakhs P.M.
No expectations. C.N.B.
98407 97575
93637 65330

URDU

Sunni, Sheik 38/6' Unmarried Regional Manager in MNC, Seeks Homely, Educated, Unmarried Girl. Mobile: 9787265657

MARRIAGE BUREAU

US UK Canada All Caste Religion 1st Marriage Remarriage. Ct:8248757840

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BRAHMIN IYER, 30, 183 cms, Management Professional, Pursuing in MBA. Lives in US. Parents are working professionals. Family is financially well off. Looking for an affable match. Contact: 6366448344

DEVAR, 27, 170 cms, Businessman, MDA. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Businessman with a good net worth. Looking for a like minded match from Devar/ Mudaliyar community. Contact: 6366448343

MUDALIYAR, 28, 175 cms, Businessman, BE. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Businessman with a good net worth. Family is financially well off. Lookini community. Contact: 6366448343

CHETTIAR, 24, 183 cms, Employed, B.Com, MSC. Lives in UK. Parents are Employed. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match. Contact: 6366448344

ELITE GROOMS WANTED

BRAHMIN-IYER, 24, 165 cms, Entrepreneur, Masters in Arts. Lives in Coimbatore. Father is a Businessman with a good net worth. Looking a suitable match from Pillai Community. Contact: 6366448343

BRAHMIN, 28, 163 cms, Private Wealth Manager, Masters. Lives in London. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable match. Contact: 6366530296

MUDALIYAR, 24, 165 cms, Entrepreneur, MSc. Lives in Thriruvannamalai. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking a like minded match from Mudaliyar community. Contact: 6366448343

MUDALIYAR, 28, 165 cms, Employed, PhD. Lives in Chennai. Parents are in Employed. Family is financially well off. Looking for a compatible match. Contact: 6366448344

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PALGHAT BRAHMIN Aiyar Vadamal boy 34 MA 172cm Ayilyam working in Ernakulam seeking Alliance from Kerala / Tamilnad brides 9946451193

CANADIAN CITIZEN, Nair Boy 30/152 Cm, Karthika, using cane support for walking, seeking suitable alliance from educated girls. Please contact : 9447048155 / 9074626513. Brokers excuse.

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

BRIDE WANTED
My son is a 20-year-old boy, an Australian Citizen, Studying Software Engineering and Finance Technology at Monash University (Melbourne, Australia,55th best in the World); Physically challenged, cannot walk, and is Super intelligent, has Good hearing and Good vision. Ancestral Native Coimbatore, Tamilnadu.
We are looking for a girl of Non-Consummation.
Caste no bar, religion no bar, education no bar, money no bar, must speak Tamil or English and must be interested in taking care of her physically challenged husband.
WhatsApp your details to
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TAMIL

HINDU NADAR BE, MS Texas, 27/175cm 5,00,000 p/m, Seeks Suitable Bride. Contact:K.A Raman Nadar 9380791999

ALLIANCE INVITED from parents of any Tamil Hindu girl aged 29 to 33yrs. for 36yrs self propelled Teetotaller –9043631278. jk100gps@gmail.com

59, HANDSOME, Clean Habits, Comfortable Person Needs Widow / Divorcee. Ct: 9360663852

AGAMUDAYA MUDALIYAR, 42 Mirugasiridam PhD TN Govt Job Rs 1.35 Lakh P/ M. 'No Broker' Divorced: 7904550883

NAYAKKAR, SR.ELECTRITION, 32/ 167cm, 4.5Lacks PA, cast no bar. Ct.9025230151

Tamil Mudaliar, 33 years/183 cms Hastha Star Data Scientist MNC fair seeks good looking Bride with good Family background. Cont 9441088542.

PILLAI 36 Swati/ Tula Govt officer Chennai 13 LPA looking bride caste no bar employed Ct 8056033532

WE ARE seeking a bride for our only son, aged 30, who holds B.Tech degree and a PG from IIM. He manages our family business in the Logistics industry with a turn over of around 15 Cr. We are primarily based in Hosur & Chennai. He has a younger sister who is yet to be married, parents intercaste marriage and managing the family business. Earlier marriage ended in a divorce. We are open to any community from a decent Hindu family. Looking forward to a prospective bride with recent photograph and horoscope. Parents from Government services are preferred. Contact us at devtara093@gmail.com

WANTED HOMELY girl (age 33–37) for a Hindu (Mutharaiyar) smart boy, 38yrs, 5ft 2inch, Degree holder own business. Widowed or divorcee accepted. Contact 9942356552

AGE 37 Handsome, Comfortable Groom needs VIP Girl and first Marriage, Remarriage, Divorce. Ct: 9597834451

YADHAVA, 27, Software Engineer at Salem, seeks suitable graduate bride 9894366469, 9994290232

TAMIL

ELITE MUDALIYAR 25yrs B.Tech Business family Chennai.Seeks Groom in Business Family 9710093999/ 9710091999

Viswakarma Dentist, 1996/172cm, own Clinic in Chennai, seeks Qualified, well settled Groom from Chennai, caste no bar Contact: 9841041225

ELITE MUDALIAR 33yrs PG divorcee seeks Employed or Business Groom in Chennai Caste no bar. Ct:9025049368

YADHAVA VEG 29/172cm BTech MBA bangalore seeks banglore based USA Groom CNB Ct: Geetham 9884858014

DOCTOR MD (Pathology), DCH, 38 yrs, Hindu BC, Divorcee without child, placed in private medical college seeks well settled, compatible & affectionate Groom. CNB.Ct:8056868090

Reputed Senguntha Mudaliar fmly seeks Chennai based MD/ MS/MDS / MTech boy for their 27/5'6'/65/ fair slim nonveg MDS girl. 9444274644

Vanniakula kshatriya, 29yrs/165cms, MBBS, MD, (Paediatrics) on going, Govt. Doctor. seeks professional Groom (pref. Doctor) Ct: 98842 44151.

RC GIRL 28/170cm Working in Microsoft Parents Keralite Settled in Chennai Own Business Seeks Chennai Based Groom from a Good Family Background. 9345262574

Seek Groom For 30 Years Old Tamil Doctor with Visible Skin Patches. Caste Nobar. Please Contact: 96116 66255.

TAMIL

PILLAI / MUDALIAR, 34, MD, Well Settled family seeks Groom aged 34-36 yrs, Engineer/ Business/ Doctor. Contact: 9345855735

VISWAKARMA BE.,ME, 1992 working in NLC India Limited seeking suitable groom. Ct: 98412 11033/ 89392 17459

TELUGU

KAMMA NAIDU 25yrs, MBBS, Elite Business family in Chennai. Seeks Suitable Groom Ct:9710093999/ 9710091999

HINDU TELUGU Naidu Born Aug 1990/ 165cm Ph.D Scholar smart medium complexion from a Reputed family seeks well educated and settled groom in India born after 1987 Ct:9790908109

KAMMA, 98 born/ 180cm pretty smart girl, very affluent with engineering colleges and business looking for tall handsome affluent kamma grooms preferably Chennai. 7305010105

RICH NAIDU 23yrs, MA(UK), Elite business family in Chennai.Seeks Suitable Groom Ct:9962791888/ 7094991999

CHENNAI, BALIJA naidu, only daughter, upper middle class 25yrs/5'/ MCA working in Bangalore seeks well educated well settled groom. Subsect no bar.Ct: 87542 29161.

NAIDU 26/157 Fair, Beautiful, MBBS, MS,OG– KMC,Chennai, Reputed Elite Family, CNB. 9363986547,9363767415

TAMIL

CSI CHRISTIAN NADAR 30/ 175/ B.E., M.S./Smart, Work in Europe. Seeks Suitable Bride. Contact: 8610774283

CSI NADAR, 39, 180cm, Divorced, DHMCT, PGDHRM, Entrepreneur, Parents Entrepreneurs, Family is Financially Well off, Looking for a amicable Match. Ph: 7305316655

RC CHRISTIAN, 41yrs/170, B.E. Software Engineer, never married, Chennai, other community alliances also accepted, CT– 9500188067

VISWAKARMA, Doctor Parents,Seek alliance for their Divorcee son, MBA, 12 LPA, PVT company. 40/177, Pooratathi - Meena Rasi, having 9yr old son. no dowry, Ct: 99945 35673

TAMIL VISWAKARMA (GS) Boy, M.E 27yrs IT Professional in Intel, Bangalore seeks proposals from the same community, educated family. Contact: 99441 67800.

SITUATIONS VACANT

MEDICAL

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THE HINDU
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Karnataka HC admonishes State authorities for externment of persons in blatant ignorance of law

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

FROM THE COURT

HC directs Chief Secretary to notify all the authorised officers to ensure strict compliance to the laws

The High Court of Karnataka has admonished the authorities of the State government for consistently passing orders of externment of persons by "blatantly and blissfully ignoring" the provisions of the Karnataka Police (KP) Act, 1963, and in deliberate violation of the directions issued in a series judgements by the High Court and the Supreme Court.

Making it clear that "Any repetition in passing externment orders in violation of the law and deliberate defiance to the directions issued by the courts would fringe on the borders of contumacious contempt on the part of the State, and would be viewed seriously," the High Court directed the Chief Secretary to notify all the authorised officers to ensure strict compliance to the laws and the orders of the courts while passing orders of externment.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the order while quashing an order of externment of one Sachin M.R. under Section 55 of the KP Act by the Assistant Commissioner (AC), Mysuru district, based on a report submitted by the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mysuru.

Pointing out that provisions of the law was blatantly and blissfully ignored by the authorities in the present case, the High Court said that "the show cause notice issued to the petitioner appears to be a farce and issued only for the purpose of a make believe compliance of the statute, not to afford any opportunity, in real time, to the petitioner".

Pointing out that there are several procedural safeguards in the KP Act for passage of an order of externment, the High Court said: "It is trite that procedural safeguards are the lifeblood of liberty, which cannot be treated or taken away in the manner that it is done in the present case."

Right to movement

Citing apex court's verdict that externment is not an ordinary measure and must be resorted to sparingly, only in extraordinary circumstances, as an order of externment takes away the fundamental right of movement under Article 19 (1)(d) of the Constitution, the High Court said that authorities passing of externment orders in violation of the law amounts to abuse of the power resulting in mushrooming of petitions in the courts against such illegal orders.

In the present case, the petitioner had three criminal cases pending against him though not convicted in any of them, and he was on March 20 initally externed to Davanagere and later to Tumakuru without following the procedure laid down in KP Act and the directions of the courts.

Construction workers' health check-up exposes serious risk factors they face

Sources in Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board say a total of about 11 lakh workers and their family members of about 45 lakh registered workers are to be screened for 20 health parameters this year

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

The initial health screening test results of construction workers in Karnataka, which is more than halfway through, have shown some startling revelation about their health conditions and risk factors.

While about 32.6% of around 7.21 lakh construction workers screened so far are found to be at risk of developing hypertension, about 18.4 % are found to be at risk of developing diabetes. About 35.6 % of the workers are at risk of developing liver disease and about 15.5 % of workers are found to be at risk of anaemia.

Budget allocation

Sources in Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board said that a total of about 11 lakh workers and their family members of about 45 lakh registered workers are to be screened for 20 health parameters this year. The board, which spent about ₹150 crore on the health check-up last year, has budgeted ₹400 crore for 2023-2024. Of the 11 lakh workers, board sources said that the screening of 7.21 lakh workers and family members was completed by March 11. The health check is expected to be completed in the next three months. The government is spending about ₹2,950 per person for 20 stipulated tests.

Labour Minister Santhosh Lad said: "The government will compile and evaluate the data from the test. We will see if more money is required by the worker for follow-up treatment or we will call a tender and send them to the hospital ourselves since they require some kind of assistance. We are evaluating something that no one has done in the country so far." He said that while those who did not undergo health tests this year will be selected next year, the number of beneficiaries could be bigger than 11 lakh.

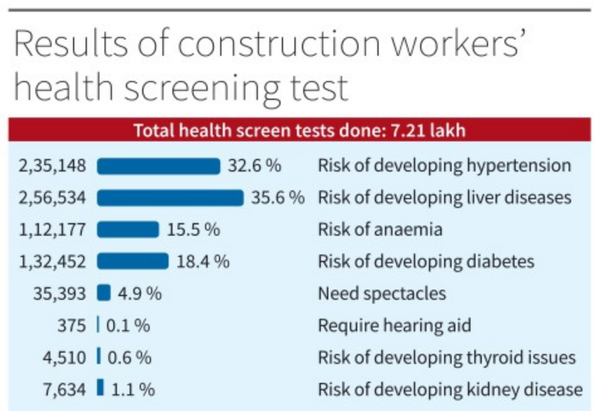
Protest by workers

The board had taken up the health screening test amidst protests by the union workers.

"Though ₹150 crore had been spent last year, many labourers did not get the health report and there was no counselling. While we asked the board to get the screening test done through government hospitals in the State, 8 private facilities were chosen to conduct the tests," K. Mahantesh, general secretary of Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers Federation, told *The Hindu*. He further said, "We opposed the scheme as there was neither an audit mechanism to monitor the scheme nor was there any follow-up. It is a target-oriented scheme just to meet numbers and not in the interest of workers. It has been difficult to mobilise workers for the test too. Besides, the Labour Department was concerned only with meeting the target fixed for each district or zone. There is also no clarity on how the beneficiaries are selected."

Why private players

Acknowledging that there were issues in the earlier health check-ups when reports were irregular, Labour Department sources said there will be a follow-up this time. "Plans are afoot to provide nutritional kits to those suffering from anaemia, those requiring hearing aid and spectacles this year. Expert opinions will be sought to tackle cases that are at risk of developing other health issues." On involving private players, sources said that the government hospitals at many places do not have infrastructure to do such a big exercise.



> We will see if more money is required by the worker for follow-up treatment or we will call a tender and send them to the hospital ourselves
>
> **SANTHOSH LAD**
> Labour Minister

Timings
BENGALURU

SUNDAY, APR. 07		
RISE	06:12	SET 18:32
RISE	04:58	SET 17:16
MONDAY, APR. 08		
RISE	06:11	SET 18:32
RISE	05:42	SET 18:14
TUESDAY, APR. 09		
RISE	06:11	SET 18:32
RISE	06:26	SET 19:14

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	36	25
Mysuru	37	24
Bengaluru	37	24

Bengaluru Today
37°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be very warm with uneasy afternoon.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist & haze. Day will be very warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will be pleasant.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform General Public that my client is intending to purchase the schedule properties belonging to **Sri. Syed Pasha Mohideen,** son of Sri. Syed Ahmed Hussain, aged about 76 years, Residing at: 240, Second Cross, Mango Garden Layout, Konanakunte Cross, Doddakallasandra, Bangalore-560 062. (AADHAAR: 7474 1984 3940).

Any, person, having any claim over the schedule properties, may lodge their objections or claims, in writing with all supporting documentary evidence by registered post with regard to such claim with the undersigned **within 10 (ten) days** hereof, failing which my clients will proceed to conclude the sale transaction. Any claims lodged thereafter will not be entertained by my client.

SCHEDULE

FIRST ITEM: All that piece and parcel of the agricultural land measuring 3 Acres 36 Guntas and 15 Guntas of Kharab Land in Sy.No.247, Katha No.145 assessed at Rs.4.53/-, situated at Bommachanahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Ramanagara Taluk and District and bounded on the: **East by :** Government Oni and Sy No:220, **West by :** Land in Sy Nos:244 and 246, **North by :** Land in Sy No:245, **South by :** Land in Sy No:248 belonging to Sri. Syed Pasha Mohideen.

SECOND ITEM: All that piece and parcel of the agricultural land measuring 4 Acres 5 Guntas and 11 Guntas of Kharab Land in Sy.No.248, Katha No.145 assessed at Rs.6.68/-, situated at Bommachanahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Ramanagara Taluk and District and bounded on the: **East by :** Government Oni and Sy No:249, **West by :** Government Gomala in Sy No:53, **North by:** Land in Sy No:246 and Land in Sy No:247 belonging to Sri.Syed Pasha Mohideen, **South by :** Government oni and Sy Nos:250 and 249.

THIRD ITEM: All that piece and parcel of the agricultural land measuring 5 Acres 34 Guntas and 23 Guntas of Kharab Land in Sy.No.298, Katha No.12 assessed at Rs.8.60/-, situated at Bommachanahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Ramanagara Taluk and District and bounded on the: **East by :** Land in Sy No:246, **West by :** Land in Sy No:53, **North by :** Land in Sy No:53, **South by :** Government Oni and Land in Sy No:53.

N S RACHANA, N C JANARDHAN
RACHANA LAW ASSOCIATES
"Lakshmideep", I Floor, No.2980, 17 th Cross, Banashankari II Stage, Bangalore-560 070.
PH : 9731810810/9886284325. Dt : 06-04-2024

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Tender Notice No.DCE-CN-CLT-OT-03-2024
Dated: 05/04/2024

Name of the work: Shoranur Mangalore Central section- Proposed construction of lakhs months Limited U se Subway (LU S Vadakumbad) Proposed balance works including completion of subway approaches, protective works & other miscellaneous works at kin 652/500-600 between Kadalundi and Faroke. stations (Deposit work)

Tender Value: Rs. 80.54 lakhs
Completion Period: 6 months
Date of Opening: 29/04/2024 @ 12.30 hrs

Complete details & tender document will be available at **https://www.ireps.gov.in**

Deputy Chief Engineer/ Construction, Kozhikode.

SOUTHERN RAILWAYS

Signal & Telecommunication/madurai Division
E-Tender Notice No. U-SG-01-2024-25 dated 05.04.2024 and 96245264 dated 03.04.2024

Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, Southern Railway, Madurni Division for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tender for the following work as per detailed tender notice given in our e-tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in.** The tenderer(s) intending to apply need to get enrolled in the e-tender portal **"www.ireps.gov.in"** and only online tenders will be accepted. The date and time of closing is mentioned against each work. All relevant credentials & supporting documents are to be scanned and uploaded along with the offer.

Sl. No.	Description	Closing Date & time	Cash value/ Estimated cost in Rs.	EMD in Rs.	Qty
1	Provision of Dual Detection using MSDAC with existing track circuit at Dindigul station	23.04.2024 11.00hrs	5,27,54,110.76	4,13,800.00	-
2	Provision of Track Machine siding-9 stations (KDNI, KRUR, PDKT, PMK, RMD, TVN, SNKL, SVKS, UDT)-S&T work.	25.04.2024 11.00hrs	2,42,67,038.87	2,71,300,00	-
3	Proposed Replacement of existing block instrument by providing Solid State Block Instrument in Double line/Single line of Madurai Division (7 Block Sections: PMK-SQD, RMDUCP, VPT-SVKS, TEN-SMD, API-ODC, MNM-NKK, APK-VPT)	25.04.2024 11.00hrs	2,05,32,107.39	2,52,700,00	-
4	Provision of DUAL Visual display unit at leftover EI Stations of MDU Division (5 Nos) and OC at 2-IBS	29.04.2024 11.00hrs	2,98,21,834.75	2,99,100.00	-
5	Digital VHF walkie-talkie trunsceiver in frequency range 146-174 MHz with chamel spacing of 12.5kHz, battery Ni-MH/Li-ion of rating minimum 2300mAH, helical spring antenna and power output 5 walt programmable to 1 watt, 16 channel capacity, along with the programming kit, as per RDSO spec RDSO/SPN/TC/107/2018 rev accepted make (1) Motorola (2) Kenwood, and (3) Alinco only	25.04.2024 14.30hrs	81,93,920.00	1,63,880.00	310 Nos.

Divisional Railway Manager(S&T), Madurai.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client **MR. G. K. MADHU KUMAR**, S/o. Mr. Late. R. Krishnappa, residing at No.2881, 6th Division, Muttur, Doddaballapur, Bangalore Rural-561203 and others are intended & agreed to purchase the Schedule Property from **MR. K. NAGARAJ,** S/o. Late Krishnappa along with his legal heirs, as such intended to enter into registered Agreement of Sale/Absolute Sale Deed with respect to Schedule Property.

Any person/s asserting any rights, title, interest or claims in the Schedule Property or any part thereof, in any manner, against the owner or having any objections over the Schedule Property should write to the under signed within **FIFTEEN days** of the issuance of this Public Notice with all documentary proof on which they are basing and asserting their rights with regards to the Schedule Property or any part thereof, after which period our clients shall proceed on the basis that there are no claims of whatsoever nature with regards to the Purchase of the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of the Agriculture Land bearing 1) New Sy No.81/1 (previous Sy No.81, Old SY No.15), measuring 22.08 Guntas and 2) New Sy No.81/2 (previous Sy No.81, Old Sy No.15), measuring 07.08 Guntas, both situated at **Palana Jogahalli, Kasaba Hobli, Doddaballapur Taluk and Bangalore Rural District** and bounded on:-

East By : Doddaballapur to Gowribidanur Main Road;
West By : Doddaballapur to Madagiri Main Road;
North By : Land bearing Sy.No.80;
South By : Land bearing Sy.No.82.

M.J. Law Associates
Advocates,
No.2, First Floor, Chickkanna Complex, Kattigenahalli Bus Stop,
Bagalur Main Road, Banagalore-560 064
Mb No. 9901900508

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to general public that, We, Smt.Gowramma W/o Late Madaiah @ Madanna, Sri Shivananjappa @ Shivananja, and Chandrashekar.J.M sons of late Madaiah @ Madanna, are the absolute owners of the property bearing Kaneshumari/Property No.1/1/1 Property No. 152900204300600001 measuring East to West 9.14 meters, North to South 12.19 meters situated at: Road Jakkasandra Village, Cheelur Gramapanchayath, Maralavadi Hobli, Harohalli Taluk, Ramanagara District. Originally the above said property belongs to said Madaiah @ Madappa the same has been granted by BDO, Kanakapura and issued Hakkupatra in the name of Madaiah @ Madanna. As per Hakkupatra katha of the said property was standing in the name of Madaiah @ Madanna. Subsequently Sri Madaiah @ Madanna was died, after his death katha was transferred to the name of his wife Smt. Gowramma. Thereafter the legal heirs Madaiah @ Madanna, we are partitioned through the Registered Partition Deed dated 05-01-2024, which is duly Registered as Document No. KNK-1-12419-2023-24, on 06-03-2024, in the partition, the property was allotted to Chandrashekar.J.M. accordingly katha and other panchayath documents are standing in the name said Chandrashekar.J.M, During year of 04-12-2003 at the time of shifting the house my father have lost the above said Hakkupatra. Hence, it is hereby requested to the public in general that to hand over the said Hakkupatra if found, to the address mentioned below or to contact the mobile number given below.

Chandrashekar.J.M. S/o Late Madaiah @ Madanna, Chiloor Village, Maralavadi Hobli, Harohalli Taluk, Ramanagara District. Mobile No: 9739300337

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that My Client Sri. Jai Kumar Srinivasa Reddy S/o Sri. Srinivasa Reddy is intending to purchase the schedule property mentioned hereunder from its owner Sri. Jayakumar .N, S/o late N.K. Narayana Naik, R/at No. P8, Thara Prabha Urban Clusters, T.C. Palya, K.R. Puram, Bengaluru-560036.

Any person/s, having any right/claim, interest/charge/lien or minor claims over the schedule property may raise their objection to the undersigned within 10 days from this day with documentary proof failing which no claims will be entertained thereafter and My Client will proceed to finalize the sale transaction.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing No.292, situated at 1st Main Road, HAL II Stage, Indiranagar, Hoysalanagar Ward No.80, Bengaluru, bearing BBMP PID No.82-20-292, measuring East to West : 31 feet and North to South : 33 feet, in all measuring 1023 sq.ft, together with building measuring 700 sq.ft in Ground floor and 500 sq.ft each on First and Second Floor, and bounded on :-

East by : Site No.291,
West by : Road,
North by : Residential House No.672,
South by : Residential House No. 292/A.

V. Sudhakar, Advocate
No. 64/1, Moore Road, I Cross,
Veeranna Garden, Frazer Town,
Bangalore-560005.
M: 9845029581, 9482201736

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
(Department of Road Transport & Highways, New Delhi)

PUBLIC NOTICE
II nd Additional Notification

No: LAQ/NH-844/CR/01/II Addl/2023-24 **Date: 03.04.2024**

As per the powers vested under sec. 3D(1) and (2) of National Highways Act 1956 (48 of 1956) with amended act of 1997. Central Government has acquired the land specified in Schedule below, for building (widening/ four laningetc), management and operation of National Highway No. 844 on the stretch of land from Km 0.000 to 10.400 (Neralur-Rayakottai_Dharmapuri section of NH-844) in Bangalore Urban District in the State of Karnataka. This notification has been published on 16.03.2024 in the Gazette of India, PART-II Section 3 Sub section (ii) under S.O. 1488(E) dated: 16.03.2024.

Under the provisions of Sub sec (1) (2) (3) and (4) of Sec -3G of National Highways Act 1956, the public notice is hereby issued to the owners/interested person of the lands, to produce the following documents either by themselves or by their representatives, on the date and time, at the place, specified below: (1)Original records, (2)Sale/Partition/Other deeds showing the land ownership/title, (3) R.T.C of the present year, (4)Latest e-swattu property document of the Grama Panchayath (5)Receipt for having paid Assessment upto date (completely), (6)Copy of the Mutation register extract, any other relevant documents, and also the proof of documents in justification of the ownership of land.

If anybody fails to produce the above documents to the undersigned on or within the date and time specified below, the compensation will be awarded as per the records available in this office:

Address to be contacted by land owners/Interested persons for enquiry	Date and Time of enquiry	Name of the Talk and Name of the village
1	2	3
Office of the SLAO AND CA, National Highways Authority of India, NH-844, Bangalore Urban District, #678/3, Neerubhavi Kempanna Layout, Hebbal, Bangalore-560024	Within 15 days from the date of Public Notice Published in the Newspaper only on working days.	**Anekal Taluk** 1. Halehalli 2. Samandur 3. Thirumagondanahalli 4. Neralur 5. Kambalipura

MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
NOTIFICATION
New Delhi, 03rd April, 2024
II nd Additional Notification

S.O. 1488(E) whereas by the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, S.O. 344(E) dt: 17/01/2024 published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary Part II, Section 3, Sub Section(ii), issued under Sub-Section(1) of section of 3A of the National Highways Act 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act) the Central Government declared its intention to acquire the land specified in the schedule annexed to the said notification for building (Widening/four laning etc.,) maintenance management and operation of the NH-844 on the stretch of land from Km 0.00 to Km 10.4 (Bangalore Urban District) in the District of the Bangalore Urban in the state of Karnataka.

And whereas the substance of the said notification S.O. 344(E) dt: 17/01/2024 has been published in "Vijaya Vani-Kannada" and "The Hindu-English" both dated: 09/02/2024 under Sub-Section (3) of Section 3A of the said Act.

And whereas, the Competent Authority has not received objections filed under section 3-C.

And whereas in pursuance of sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the Competent Authority has submitted its report to the Central Government.

Now, therefore upon receipt of the said report of the competent authority and in exercise of the powers conferred by Sub-Section (1) of Section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that the land specified in the said schedule should be acquired for the aforesaid purpose;

And further, in pursuance of sub-Section (2) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, the land specified in the said Schedule shall vest absolutely in the Central Government free from all encumbrances.

Scan for Detailed English Notification

Sd/-
Special Land Acquisition Officer & Competent Authority,
NHAI, Hebbal, Bengaluru-24.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This notice is issued on behalf of My client **Sri.Madhusudhana.M.N** S/o Sri. Narasimhaiah.M.C to bring the notice of the general public that below schedule property was acquired through registered partition deed doc No.TMK-1-22372/2023-24 of Book-I, registered on.22.02.2024 between himself & his father Sri.Narasimhaiah.M.C & brothers. Thus said Sri.Madhusudhana.M.N is become a single owner of the schedule property. The above Sri.Narasimhaiah.M.C has legal heirs. VIZ., First wife 1.Late Smt.Padma (died) & her children 1a.Madhusudhana.M.N, 1b.Manjunatha.M.N And Second wife 2.Late Ramakka (died), & her children 2a.Pradeep.M.N, 2b.Sudeep.M.N, all are made said partition deed, as legal heirs Sri.Narasimhaiah.M.C, without said persons there is no legal heirs of the said Sri. Narasimhaiah.M.C & Late Ramakka & Late Padma.

If any person/s, firm, company, institution or organization has any claim are holding the afore mentioned document, schedule proeprty OR said persons, they may contact the undersigned in writing within 14 days from the date of this notice failing which it will be presumed that there are no claims.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of the immovable residential property bearing Madagondanahalli Village Katha No.31, E-Katha No. 152500902200200033, measuring East to West 10.058 Mtrs and North to South 15.24 Mtrs, in all measuring 153.29 Sq.Mtrs,, together with R.C.C House thereon, situated at **Madagondanahalli Village, Urdigere Hobli, Tumakuru Taluk,** Now comes under the Limits of **Maidala Grama Panchayathi, Tumakuru,** and bounded by:

East by : Property of Tirumalaia
West by : Property of Padma w/o Narasimhaiah,
North by : Road,
South by : Sy.Number Land.

H. Prahlada, Advocate & Solicitor,
For H.P.Law, #2, 3rd Floor, Venkateshwara Complex, Yeshwanthpur, Bangalore-560022
M : 7760061073

Before the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal at Bengaluru Bench
Company Petition No.16/BB/2024

Hydro BS India Private Limited
Registered Office :
Nos. 201-202, Municipal Nos. 29/14 & 29/15,
2nd Floor, Prestige Meridian-1, 29 M. G Road, Bengaluru - 560 001
CIN: U46620KA2010FTC165319
Email: sukesh.kl@hydro.com
...Petitioner

NOTICE

Notice may be taken that an application was presented to the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Bengaluru Bench on 17-01-2024 for confirming the reduction of the share capital of the above Company from Rs. 3,44,59,64,800 to Rs. 24,62,81,300.

The Notice to individual creditors have been issued. The list of creditors prepared on 31-12-2023 by the Company is available at the registered office of the Company for inspection on all working days during 9:00 A.M to 6:00 P.M between Monday to Friday.

If any creditor of the Company has any objection to the application or the details in the list of creditors, the same may be sent (along with supporting documents) and details about his name and address and the name and address of his Authorized Representative, if any, to the undersigned at the Regd. office at Nos. 201-202, Municipal Nos. 29/14 & 29/15, 2nd Floor, Prestige Meridian-1, 29, M. G Road, Bangalore-560001 within three months of date of this notice.

If no objection is received within the time stated above, entries in the list of creditors will, in all the proceedings under the above petition to reduce the share capital of the company, be treated as correct.

It may also be noted that a hearing has been fixed for 13th day of June, 2024 on which the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal shall hear the application. In case any creditors intends to attend the hearing he should make a request along with his objections, if any.

Date: 07/04/2024
Place: Bengaluru

For Hydro BS India Private Limited

Sandeep Jayaprakash Kuncham
Director : DIN: 09723607

Published by Nirmala Lakshman at No 19&21, Bhagwan Mahaveer Road, Bengaluru-560001 and Printed by C. Sridhar at Plot No. 13-D, Bommasandra-Jigani Link Road, KIADB Industrial Area, Bommasandra, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru-560099 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act).
ISSN 0971 - 751X

Yatnal's remark on Dinesh sparks a row

The Gandhinagar Block Congress Committee has complained to the police in Bengaluru seeking action against senior BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil R. Yatnal who made an unsavoury remark at Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao. Referring to Mr. Rao's inter-religious marriage to Tabu Rao, Mr. Yatnal said the Congress leader's house is "half Pakistan". Mr. Yatnal's attack came after Mr. Rao tweeted about a BJP leader being detained for questioning by a team of the NIA in connection with The Rameshwaram Café blast case. The BJP MLAs' personal jibe evoked a sharp reaction from Ms. Tabu Rao. She called it "downright cheap, derogatory and defamatory." She said on X, "I may be born a Muslim, but nobody can question my Indianness."

Dinesh Gundu Rao

Banjara leaders upset over Cong. ticket denial

Congress leaders belonging to the Banjara/Lambani community seem to be disappointed by the denial of at least one seat to the community to contest the Lok Sabha election.

Community leaders expressed their disappointment to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar at a meeting held on Friday and attended by Ministers, party leaders, and candidates contesting elections in the second phase.

Denial of the Cabinet berth, denial of ticket to contest the general election, and denial of senior positions such as working president in the KPCC have reportedly irked legislators and former MLAs, sources in the party said.

"Congress has won 136 seats and secured 43% of the votes in the Assembly polls. BJP won 64. There is no question of the government falling."

SIDDARAMAIAH,
Chief Minister

CPI to hold convention

The Communist Party of India is organising a convention of all the coalition partners of the INDIA bloc, in Bengaluru on Sunday. A booklet detailing the alleged failures of the BJP government at the Centre will be released on the occasion. The meeting will be held at Telugu Vignana Samithi Auditorium, Gayathri Devi Park, Vyalikaval.

"If Bengalureans demand that all the taxes they pay be spent on them alone, what will be the fate of people in Kalyana Karnataka?"

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN,
Union Finance Minister

A file photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with BJP leader K.S. Eshwarappa.

'Rebel' KSE files caveat over use of Modi's photo in his campaign

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

The former Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader K.S. Eshwarappa has filed a caveat in the Karnataka High Court to ensure no *ex parte* order is passed if the Shivamogga district BJP unit moves court seeking an order restricting him from using the portrait of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Lok Sabha election campaign.

The former Minister, who has raised a banner of revolt against the State unit of the BJP, moved the court as he received information that his rivals could approach the court with a plea to restrict him from using Mr. Modi's photo.

Mr. Eshwarappa informed *The Hindu* over phone that he filed the caveat in the High Court on Friday. "There is no restriction on using the Prime Minister's photo in the campaign. However, anticipating that some people may object, I have filed a caveat," he said.

Mr. Eshwarappa has been using Mr. Modi's photo in the campaign since he announced his decision to contest as an Independent candidate against B.Y. Raghavendra in Shivamogga. Earlier, Mr. Raghavendra, incumbent MP who is contesting on the BJP ticket, had questioned the use of Mr. Modi's photos in Mr. Eshwarappa's campaign. He decided to enter the fray in Shivamogga after his son K.E. Kanthesh was denied the BJP ticket in the Haveri Lok Sabha constituency.

Mr. Eshwarappa said, "He is the Prime Minister. He does not belong to any one person. Mr. Modi is in my heart."

Rejection of BSP nominee's papers for Mysuru can impact outcome

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The nomination paper of BSP candidate Revathiraj was among the four for the Mysuru Lok Sabha constituency which was rejected during scrutiny on Friday. A disappointed Ms. Revathiraj said the rejection of her nomination was shocking.

Ms. Revathiraj, a native of Mysuru, but settled in Bengaluru, alleged a "conspiracy" in the rejection of her nomination and said the party leadership may prefer moving the court over the issue. BSP State general secretary R. Muniyappa said the rejection of their candidate's nomination papers was a setback to the party in the region, but ruled out any possibility of the party announcing its support to any other candidate or party.

Political observers said the absence of the BSP candidate in the fray can make a crucial difference in a closely fought election in the Mysuru constituency. For, the BSP candidate during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, B. Chandra, had polled 24,597 votes and finished third.

Meanwhile, Congress leaders said they were expecting to gain from the absence of the BSP candidate as the party voters are opposed to the BJP.

CM, DKS flex their muscles on home turfs with eye on post-poll scenario

Good performance of the Congress in the Lok Sabha election is seen as crucial for both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar

BATTLE OF PRESTIGE

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

In a battle of perception as well as prestige in their respective traditional political bastions, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has been criss-crossing the Lok Sabha constituencies of Mysuru and Chamarajanagar, while his deputy D.K. Shivakumar is aggressively campaigning in Bengaluru Rural and Mandya, roping in leaders of the Opposition into the Congress to boost their electoral advantage over the rival alliance of BJP-JD(S).

As the mercury rises in the election campaign, the one-upmanship between the two top Congress leaders also seems to be resurfacing, with both stoking the issue in their respective bastions of possible change of leadership in the State government after the election results.

The term of Mr. Shivakumar, who has been the president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) for the last four years, is expected to end after the Lok Sabha elections. Victories on his Vokkaliga-dominated home turf of Bengaluru Rural and Mandya constituencies are crucial for him to stake a claim to the Chief Minister's post.

Mr. Siddaramaiah has already spent several days now in the backward classes and Dalit-dominant Chamarajanagar and Mysuru constituencies to ensure the victory of Sunil Bose, son of his loyalist and Minister H.C. Mahadevappa, and M. Lakshman, who belongs to the Vokkaliga community, respectively. It was during this campaign that the Chief Minister stirred a controversy by saying "no one will be able to touch me" if the party gains a lead of at least 60,000 votes in Varuna, the constituency he represented in the Assembly, which comes under the Chamarajanagar constituency.

'Lucky' constituency

"Should I remain [as CM] or not? So, I request you with folded hands", Mr. Siddaramaiah had said and added that Varuna was his "lucky" constituency. "In 2013, I won here and I became the Chief Minister. Last year, I won and I became CM for the second time." Sources in the party claimed the pressure would mount on Mr. Siddaramaiah to leave the top job if the party does not fare well.

During his electioneering in Mandya, Mr. Shivakumar hinted at his ambition by saying, "Let me tell you... You had me in mind and gave the Congress the highest number of seats in Mandya in the Assembly election. Your wish will not go in vain. Don't worry." In the 2023 Assembly polls in Mandya, the Congress won seven out of eight constituencies, including Melkote, where party-backed Sarvodaya Karnataka Paksha's Darshan Puttannaiah won. It was read as an apparent support to Mr. Shivakumar as the Chief Minister. However, the party high command preferred Mr. Siddaramaiah to occupy the top post.

A few days ago, during the swearing-in ceremony of newly appointed working presidents, Mr. Shivakumar said that "distribution of visiting cards is not enough. You have to work hard and discharge your responsibilities ... otherwise you will become "former" soon after the Lok Sabha elections".

Past instances

A few days after the 1980 Lok Sabha election results, D. Devaraj Urs resigned as Chief Minister after his party, Congress (U), failed to secure even a single seat in the polls. The Congress (I) bagged 27 while the Janata party one seat. Most of the Urs' MLAs defected to the Congress (I) and Gundu Rao became the Chief Minister.

Again, soon after the 1984 Lok Sabha elections, then Chief Minister Ramakrishna Hegde dissolved the Assembly when the Janata Party secured just four seats out of the total 28. The Janata Party forced a snap poll and Hegde returned to power with a majority (139 seats) in the 1985 Assembly polls. In 2019, the JD(S)-Congress government collapsed after the alliance performed poorly by securing two seats in the Lok Sabha polls.

In their bastions: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah campaigning in Mysuru and (right) Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar talking to people at Sri Raghavendra Swami Temple in Bengaluru while campaigning for his brother D.K. Suresh, Congress candidate for Bengaluru Rural constituency. FILE PHOTOS

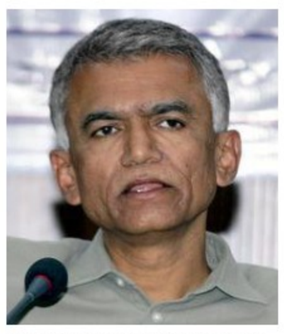
Minister disputes Shah's claim; says State declared drought ahead of deadline

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Disputing the recent statement of Union Home Minister Amit Shah that the Karnataka government submitted its proposal seeking drought relief three months late, leading to a delay in providing relief to the State, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda has asserted that it was done well in time.

He countered Mr. Shah's claim with documents on Saturday in a public debate on 'Has Karnataka been meted out injustice by the Union government?' organised by Jagruta Karnataka, a civil society group, where Mr. Gowda was supposed to face off with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. She however, did not turn up for the event.

"We declared drought on September 13, 2023, 48 days before the October 31 deadline for the same. We submitted a memorandum seeking drought relief on September 22, 2023. The Central team visited the State between October 4 and 9, 2023. The team further submitted its report on October 20, 2023. The subcommittee of the National Executive Committee (SC-NEC), held a meeting on November 13, 2023, and on November 20, the SC-NEC made its recommendations to the Home Ministry," he said,



Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda

displaying related documents to substantiate this claim in a presentation he made for over two hours.

"While Mr. Shah now claims that we declared drought three months late, a delegation of the State government led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met him on December 20, 2023, when he assured us that he would hold the meeting on December 23 and clear the funds. We have also met the Prime Minister in this regard. The Union government, in the minutes of the meeting circulated recently, said the Karnataka model of declaring drought was to be adopted by all States," he said displaying documents regarding the same.

'My Tax, My Right'

The Minister, the State's representative in the GST Council, took on Ms. Sitharaman in her absence on the State's share in tax devolution and alleged "injustice" regarding the same. Ms. Sitharaman had earlier in the day termed the 'My Tax, My Right' campaign "against national interest".

Rebutting her statement, Mr. Gowda said Karnataka had been one of the most self-reliant States in terms of share of Central funds in the State's Budget and was the second highest taxpayer, only next to Maharashtra. He also added that Karnataka paid the highest per capita tax in the country. "We are proud that we pay the highest tax and are supporting other States that are lagging behind. We understand regional disparity, which we also face within our State. For every ₹100 tax we pay, we get back a meagre ₹12 to ₹14, while some States get back several times more than what they pay. We are not asking for all taxes we pay to be devolved to us. But our State is definitely eligible to get at least ₹30 of every ₹100 we pay as tax and asking for the same is not anti-national," he said.

On FC's 'final report'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday claimed that the Centre had released all the funds to Karnataka as recommended in the final report of the 15th Finance Commission (FC). "There were some recommendations in the interim report that the Congress is repeatedly asking for on public forums. But there is no such recommendation in the final report," she said at press meet.

However, Karnataka Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda countered this at the public debate on the issue later in the day, displaying documents to prove his point. He said the 15th Finance Commission, since it delayed its report by a year, submitted a report for 2020-2021 in which it said it wants to ensure no State should suffer a loss of revenue for that fiscal due to its recommendations. "Karnataka was one such State and the FC recommended that the Union government fill this shortfall with a special grant of ₹5,495 crore. Next year, the 15th FC submitted its report for 2021-2026. The Finance Minister is misleading the people referring to the 2020-21 report as an interim report. The Union government has not given Karnataka the special grant which is due," he said.

Will BJP's Preetham Gowda work for JD(S) candidate?

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

The former Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Preetham Gowda has been the centre of debates over coordination between the Janata Dal (Secular) and the saffron party in the Lok Sabha election in Hassan.

Mr. Gowda, who was elected to the Legislative Assembly from Hassan in 2018, lost to the JD(S) candidate in 2023. In fact, he built his career in politics fighting against the JD(S). He is known for his verbal duels with JD(S) leaders H.D. Revanna and his son Prajwal Revanna, incumbent MP.

The recent twists in politics have brought both the BJP and the JD(S) together. As a result, the BJP gave up the Hassan seat to the JD (S). Now the question is: Will Mr. Gowda campaign for Mr. Prajwal Revanna?

Interestingly, Mr. Gowda skipped the meetings convened by leaders of both BJP and JD(S) to ensure coordination between workers of the two parties. He was not present in Hassan when Mr. Prajwal Revanna submitted his nomination papers, though BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra was present.

BJP national general secretary Radha Mohan Das Agarwal, who is in charge of the elections in Karnataka, held a meeting in Hassan again on Saturday. It is said the meeting was convened because JD(S) top leaders complained to the BJP leadership that Mr. Gowda was working against the JD(S)-BJP alliance candidate in Hassan.

However, Mr. Agarwal, speaking to the media after the meeting, maintained that he had told Mr. Gowda to work in Mysuru. "Mr. Preetham Gowda is the party's general secretary. He has been appointed in charge of the Mysuru constituency. Mysusu is as important as Hassan is. I cannot expect Mr. Preetham Gowda to stay put in Hassan every day when he has been assigned work in Mysuru."

Preetham Gowda

The ex-MLA for Hassan is known for his verbal duels with H.D. Revanna and Prajwal Revanna

Smriti: BJP only gives importance to merit, not to dynastic politics

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Bharatiya Janata Party is the only political party in this country that gives importance to merit and not to dynastic politics, said Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani, here on Saturday.

While seeking votes for her party's Tiruvallur (SC) Lok Sabha seat nominee Pon. Balaganapathy, the Minister claimed that the Congress and the DMK opposed the steps of the Union government in granting 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

"When Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working to make India a developed country, I am told that the DMK is setting goals on how to make more money by selling more liquor," she said. If the BJP candidates in the State got elected, they would ensure that all the welfare measures of the Union government reached every family.

Later in the evening, while seeking votes for Vinoj. P. Selvam, BJP's Chennai Central candidate, at YMCA auditorium in Vepery, the Union Minister said members of the BJP had been trained to walk through difficult paths to become leaders. "It took a lot of time for the voters of Amethi Lok Sabha constituency to trust me. Even though I was defeated in 2014, I accepted it and started putting in even more hard work to become successful in 2019," she said.

3 held, one taken into custody in Kannur bomb blast case

Sources say all three arrested are affiliated to the CPI(M); while searching, the police recover seven crude bombs; explosion claimed one life and left three critically injured at Muliyathode in Panur

The Hindu Bureau
KANNUR

In the aftermath of a crude bomb blast at a house under construction at Muliyathode in the Panur police station limits in Kerala's Kannur, three people were arrested and one suspect was taken into custody on Saturday. The explosion had claimed one life and left three others critically injured.

According to the police, the arrested individuals are Athul, 29, Arun, 30, and Shabin Lal, 27, all residents of Muliyathode who were reportedly present at the scene during the bomb-making process.

Local sources have claimed that all three are affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

The house under construction, where a person died while making crude bomb in Kannur on Friday. S.K. MOHAN

The police have apprehended a suspect, Sayuj, a native of Kaivelikara, who attempted to flee via train from Vadakara to Palakkad following the incident. Sayuj was intercepted by the Palakkad railway police and subsequently handed over to the Panur police for further investigation.

While initial investigations hinted at the possible involvement of more suspects, the police are pursuing leads in the case. The inspection of the area surrounding the blast site is ongoing.

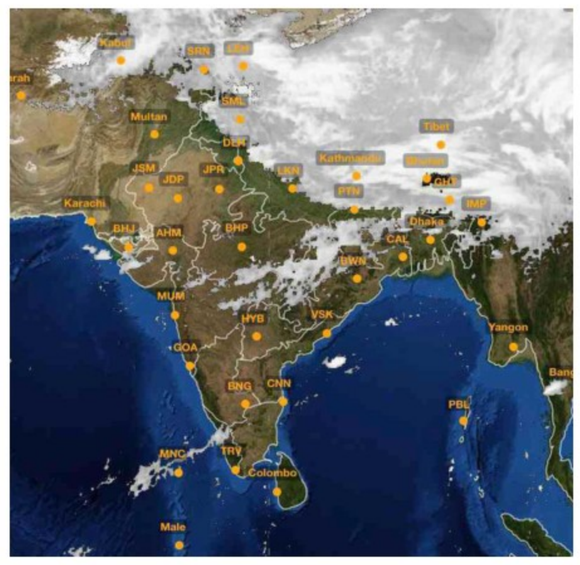
In the incident, Sheril, 31, of Muliyathode, lost his life. The explosion reportedly occurred on the terrace of the under-construction house during the bomb-making process.

Among the injured, Vineesh, 39, remains in critical condition at a private hospital in Kozhikode, while Vinod, another victim, has been transferred from a hospital in Thalassery to a facility in Kozhikode for further treatment..

During searches, the police recovered seven crude bombs.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, Telangana, west Madhya Pradesh, central Maharashtra and Kerala. Heat wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	36.6	26.7	Kozhikode	—	37.6	29.0
Ahmedabad	—	38.1	26.4	Kurnool	—	44.3	29.2
Aizawl	—	35.6	21.2	Lucknow	—	37.0	22.8
Allahabad	—	40.9	24.0	Madurai	—	39.8	26.2
Bengaluru	—	37.6	23.6	Mangaluru	—	34.9	27.0
Bhopal	—	37.7	22.6	Mumbai	—	37.0	23.9
Bhubaneswar	—	39.6	27.1	Mysuru	—	37.6	21.0
Chandigarh	—	33.5	16.7	New Delhi	—	35.1	20.2
Chennai	—	39.6	25.3	Patna	—	38.3	26.1
Coimbatore	—	39.0	25.3	Port Blair	—	32.2	25.0
Dehradun	—	33.2	16.0	Puducherry	—	36.6	26.5
Gangtok	—	22.5	13.8	Pune	—	39.2	22.9
Goa	—	34.0	25.3	Raipur	—	42.6	23.0
Guwahati	—	34.6	21.6	Ranchi	—	38.5	21.6
Hubballi	—	40.0	23.0	Shillong	—	26.2	25.9
Hyderabad	—	40.6	26.2	Shimla	—	24.6	14.2
Imphal	—	31.9	19.9	Srinagar	—	21.2	4.5
Jaipur	0.4	35.4	24.1	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.6	26.7
Kochi	—	33.6	28.0	Tiruchi	—	40.5	26.4
Kohima	—	26.6	16.0	Vijayawada	—	40.7	27.0
Kolkata	—	38.3	28.1	Visakhapatnam	—	33.6	28.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	8	16	14	130	99	
Bengaluru	10	17	25	153	147	
Chennai	6	8	92	53	54	
Delhi	35	55	31	213	247	
Hyderabad	4	28	36	74	108	
Kolkata	6	8	45	82	107	
Lucknow	20	54	19	87	131	
Mumbai	61	110	34	95	133	
Pune	90	116	116	32	31	
Visakhapatnam	13	38	35	52	103	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Barbil, Odisha recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 284 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Palkalaiperur, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 28

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

BJP leader Siddharth Nath Singh says Purandeswari may get Cabinet berth

The Hindu Bureau
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

BJP election in-charge for Andhra Pradesh Siddharth Nath Singh on April 6 (Saturday) announced that the party high command has already decided to induct its Rajamahendravaram Lok Sabha constituency candidate D. Purandeswari into the Union Cabinet (if the NDA forms the government after the elections).

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the inauguration of the Rajamahendravaram Lok Sabha constituency office here, Mr. Singh said, "There is a strong message from Delhi to the TDP-JSP-BJP alliance partners, cadre and people of Rajamahendravaram that you (voters) are not only electing a Member of Parliament but you are electing a future Minister in Narendra Modi's new Cabinet.''

BJP State president D. Purandeswari and State election in-charge Siddharth Nath Singh in Rajamahendravaram on Saturday.

At 37.6° C, Bengaluru sets a new record for April

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The temperature which has been soaring daily has set a new record for Bengaluru city, as on Saturday the city recorded 37.6 degrees C. At 37.6 degrees C, the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Bengaluru city station recorded the third-highest maximum temperature in the last 15 years for April and the highest in the last eight years. "Today (April 6) the city recorded 37.6 degrees C. It is the third highest in the last 15 years and the highest in the last eight years," said A. Prasad, scientist, IMD, Bengaluru.

The highest ever recorded for April is 39.2 degrees C recorded in 2016. The normal temperature for Bengaluru during April is 34.1 degrees C. On March 5 the temperature breached the 38 degrees C mark as the KIA's weather station recorded a maximum of 38.3 degrees C.

'25 BRS MLAs ready to jump ship as they lost trust in KCR'

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana Minister for Irrigation N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has said that the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) would lose badly in the Lok Sabha election and that BRS MLAs are ready to join the Congress.

About 25 MLAs may join soon and another nine MLAs in a couple of months, he claimed saying it reflected the loss of trust of the MLAs in their leader.

Speaking to reporters at Gandhi Bhavan, Mr. Reddy said that BRS's strength fell from 108 to 39 members in the Assembly as people rejected them. With the Parliament election likely to deal them a death blow, BRS MLAs are looking at the Congress. BRS chief K. Chandrashekhar Rao's arrogance is a major factor, he said.

Telangana Irrigation Minister and Congress leader N. Uttam Kumar Reddy addressing a press meet in Hyderabad. PTI

Later, Mr. Reddy said the Congress was not encouraging defections but the MLAs were unhappy with Mr. KCR and they have realised that his intentions were not sincere.

Minister for Excise Jupally Krishna Rao countered BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao's attack on Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's visit to New Delhi several times stating that Mr. Reddy gets an appointment with the party president whenever he goes to discuss party issues. Unlike KCR who doesn't give appointments to his party MLAs and also Ministers during his term, the Congress president and top leadership meets Congress leaders on regular basis, he said.

I-T Dept. freezes CPI(M)'s account in Thrissur

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Income Tax Department has frozen the account in the name of the Thrissur district committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in a nationalised bank in the district on the charge that the account was not reflected in the annual returns filed by the party.

About ₹4.8 crore was available in the account when it was seized by the I-T Department. A recent withdrawal of ₹1 crore from it had caught the attention of the department. Officials had questioned M.M. Varghese, the Thrissur district secretary of the CPI(M), here on April 5 after searches carried out at the bank confirmed the withdrawal.

According to the department, though several other accounts of the CPI(M) were reflected in the annual returns filed by the party, the account in the name of the Thrissur district committee was missing from it. Those responsible have to explain why they did not include it in the annual returns. The department is looking at the transactions made through the account. The party will also have to confirm the source of the funds available in the account, it said.

Mr. Varghese, who was questioned by I-T officials, had denied the charges. He had appeared at the ED office as part of the investigation into the multi-crore Karuvannur Service Cooperative Bank loan scam.

M.V. Govindan, Kerala secretary of the CPI(M), said the party would take legal recourse against the I-T Department's action. It had records to prove that it had submitted the returns duly, he said.

Kerala CM questions Congress silence on CAA in its manifesto

The Hindu Bureau
ALAPPUZHA

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has questioned the "reprehensible silence" of the Congress on the issue of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in its manifesto for the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

Speaking to mediapersons at Cherthala on Saturday, Mr. Vijayan said that unlike the Congress, the manifesto of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) had pledged to scrap "draconian laws" such as the CAA, Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), among others.

"The BJP government has implemented the CAA to polarise society. It is aimed at making Muslims second-class citizens in the country. The Congress and its leadership have been maintaining silence on the CAA. Its manifesto has not promised to repeal the CAA. The silence of the Congress in its manifesto on CAA and other draconian laws points out that the party is not serious about the fight against the Sangh Parivar and its Hindutva agenda," said Mr. Vijayan, adding that Congress' decision to omit the CAA from its manifesto was "planned."

Pinarayi Vijayan

He criticised the BJP for revoking Article 370 and hit out at the Congress for "failing to oppose" the Union government's decision.

'BJP won't win in State'

He said the BJP "would not win a single seat from Kerala" in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

"Of the 20 Lok Sabha constituencies in Kerala, the BJP will not even come second in any of the seats. The Left Democratic Front will not allow communalism to take root in Kerala".

Why go for alliance if you have done anything good, Jagan asks Telugu Desam Party president Naidu

The Hindu Bureau
NELLORE

Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has ridiculed Telugu Desam Party president Nara Chandrababu Naidu on the need to go for an alliance if he had done anything good for the State.

Addressing the public as part of his 'Memantha Siddham' election campaign meeting at Kavali on Saturday, Mr. Jagan called the tie-up as an 'unholy alliance' among three parties having divergent political view points.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy greets a differently abled woman during his Memantha Siddham election campaign in Nellore district on Saturday.

Questioning Mr. Naidu's motive behind allying with the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Jana Sena Party, Mr. Jagan wondered if he had done anything worth a mention during his previous stints. "He had not fulfilled even 10% of the promises made and hence is scampering for alliance with various parties", he remarked.

Showing the TDP's manifesto to the public, Mr. Jagan said Mr. Naidu did not have the guts to tell the people what he had done. "On the other hand, we have proudly announced whatever welfare schemes we have implemented. Through DBT, we have deposited over ₹2.7 lakh crore into the accounts of the poor during the last 58 months," he said.

These apart, Mr. Jagan explained the noble intention and hard work that had gone into the delivery of government schemes at the doorsteps of the public. He explained the way government schools got a facelift, changes brought in medical and health system, grassroot governance ensured through village secretariat and volunteer system, RBK, village clinics, women's safety ensured through Disha App etc. "When you don't have the commitment to fulfil whatever you have promises, why talking tall by giving catchy slogans like 'Super Six' to deceive the people", he taunted.

Elephant that killed two farmers in TS returns to Maharashtra

Swathi Vadlamudi
HYDERABAD

The bull elephant that trampled two persons to death and kept the Telangana Forest Department on tenterhooks for three days finally returned to Maharashtra on Friday night.

The jumbo got separated from its herd and entered Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district after crossing the Pranahitha river. It attacked a farmer at Burepally village of Karjelly range on April 3.

Even as the district officials started teaming up to track the animal, another instance of trampling was reported from Kondapally village of Penchikalpet range, in which the attacked farmer died.

The two incidents had Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden Mohan Chandra Pargaien rushing to the district to monitor the tracking efforts. The elephant did not appear to have been in 'musth', which is a condition among bull elephants seen during mating season.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

C.R.Visalam
1939 -2024

Our mother, C.R.Visalam, 84 years, w/o Swargeeya P.R.Narayanaswamy, d/o Swargeeya C.S.Ranganathan and Subbalakshmi (Chitoor/Tirunellai), dil/o Swargeeya Ramakrishnaiyer and Visalakshi (Perinkulam), attained Sivalokaprapti on 27th March 2024 at 5.10 a.m. "Shubha Sweekaram" on Monday, 8th April 2024 at our residence.
Ramakrishnan (Ramesh), Bharathi (Viji) and Grand daughters
+91 9400096222, +080 23376055

Beloved Col. P.R. Narasimhan (Retd.)
passed away on 4th April 2024 at the age of 89, at his residence: 23 Defence Colony, Chennai-600032.
He is survived by his wife Mrs. Kumuda Narasimhan, their children Dr. Chitra Ashok and Anand Narasimhan, and many relatives and friends, who love him deeply and will miss him.
Ph: 9003177702

From Page One

CAA Rules allow dual citizenship: pleas in SC

"Even while including Pakistan in the list of countries, it fails to extend protection to [the] Ahmadiyya community which is one of the most persecuted groups in Pakistan. It similarly excludes rationalists, atheists and agnostic persons who do not profess any religion," the petitioners submitted.

Refugees from Myanmar are excluded, though the country was a part of British India till 1935 and though the International Court of Justice had found that genocide was perpetrated there against Muslim Rohingya refugees who are presently, due to persecution, living in India under abject conditions under threat of deportation.

The CAA and its Rules exclude Sri Lanka.

While the Statement of Objects and Reasons of CAA mentions 'Partition' and 'undivided India' as the reason for the selection of non-Muslims as a protected class of refugees, the CAA included Afghanistan which was not a part of undivided India, they said.

"Thus, it is *ex facie* clear that the foundational claim that the CAA aims to extend citizenship benefits to persecuted minorities is fundamentally flawed, and that it fails to as it arbitrarily chooses between persecuted groups of different kinds. This is not merely an issue of under inclusion *per se*. Rather, the exclusions demonstrate the lack of any rational nexus to the stated object of enacting a refugee policy," the written submissions noted.

All-weather road gives a strategic fillip to Ladakh

Maintaining logistics in the absence of all-weather roads to the region, especially during Ladakh's harsh winters, has always been a concern to security strategists. At present, security forces stock ration and ammunition months in advance to maintain a vigil on the borders. China, on the other hand, has already developed all-weather road networks close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Once the Shinkula tunnel is thrown open in western Ladakh's Zanskar Valley, the mobilisation of troops to Ladakh will be much faster and less exposed than the current routes passing close to the northern and eastern areas, surrounded by Pakistan and China.

"It will make defence preparedness much safer," another official said.

However, there are murmurs of discontentment among local people over the project. "On one hand, I am happy to learn that BRO India has connected the strategic Nimmu-Padam-Darcha road in Ladakh recently. However, I am really concerned that it might change the landscape of Zanskar, the land of rich culture and heritage," climate activist Sonam Wangchuk said in a post on X.

Pak. slams Rajnath's 'provocative' remarks

"India's assertion of its preparedness to extra-judicially execute more civilians, arbitrarily pronounced as 'terrorists', inside Pakistan constitutes a clear admission of culpability. It is imperative for the international community to hold India accountable for its heinous and illegal actions," the statement said.

Pakistan stands resolute in its intent and ability to safeguard its sovereignty against any act of aggression, as demonstrated by its robust response to India's "reckless incursion" in February 2019 which laid bare India's "hollow claims of military superiority", the statement said referring to the Balakot air strike by the Indian Air Force on February 26, 2019.

"India's ruling dispensation habitually resorts to hateful rhetoric to fuel hyper-nationalistic sentiments, unapologetically exploiting such discourse for electoral gains," the spokesperson said.

The statement further said that Pakistan has "always demonstrated its commitment" to peace in the region, but its desire for peace should "not be misconstrued".

States offer 'degraded' land for green credits

The condition is that such land be as close as possible to the forest tracts which have been razed. However, if such land is unavailable, twice the amount of 'degraded' forest land may also be made available for compensatory afforestation. Additionally, companies must also compensate for the value of the forest ecosystem, called the 'net present value'.

In several States where large tracts have been diverted for mining, getting contiguous non-forest land for compensatory afforestation is challenging. In fact, the Compensatory Afforestation Fund, whose corpus comes from the environmental compensation money paid by companies and which is to be used by States for afforestation, has thousands of crores of unspent money, simply because suitable land for regenerating forests, revenue or degraded, is unavailable.

Bhanudas Pingale, who leads the programme at the ICFRE, told *The Hindu* that the scheme was currently in the 'pilot stage'; so far, the applicants have been State and Central government entities.

Congress manifesto has stamp of Muslim League, says Modi

PM calls it a bundle of lies; says his govt. is practising true secularism and social justice as it doesn't differentiate between beneficiaries of schemes; adds it will take more stringent steps to wipe out corruption in the first 100 days of third term

The Hindu Bureau
SAHARANPUR/AJMER

A day after the Congress released its manifesto for the Lok Sabha election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attacked the party saying its manifesto had the "stamp of the Muslim League and the Left".

Addressing election rallies in Saharanpur (Uttar Pradesh) and in Pushkar (Rajasthan), Mr. Modi said the manifesto was a "bundle of lies" and "neither has policies in national interest nor a vision for national development".

Accusing the Congress of wanting to impose the Muslim League's outlook on India today, Mr. Modi said the document had exposed the party's "real face" as each of its pages had the contents to "potentially divide the country into fragments". The remaining portions of the manifesto were dominated by Leftist ideology, he added.

He also said his fight against corruption would continue and his government would take more stringent steps to wipe out corruption in the first 100 days of its third term. Preparations for bigger decisions on this front had started, he added. "What we have already done in the last 10 years was just a trailer. There is much more to come," Mr. Modi said.

He also criticised the Congress for staying away from the consecration ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. "Opposing the visit to the consecration of Ram temple? Not only this, if someone visited, he was expelled from the Congress party for six years. Can you imagine the country without Lord Ram?" Mr. Modi said, and added, "... Ram Navami is coming and people are going to celebrate. Let's see how much you will oppose it."

Reaching out to minority voters in Saharanpur, Mr. Modi said his government was practising true secularism and social justice because "our schemes don't differentiate between beneficiaries".

Mr. Modi's rally was in support of BJP candidates in Saharanpur and Kairana where the Muslim votes can prove to be decisive. While the BJP secured the Kairana seat in 2019, it lost Saharanpur to the Bahujan Samaj Party.

Alleging that the INDIA bloc parties were "saving" the corrupt, Mr. Modi said while "the BJP is driven by a mission, the Congress is working to earn commission".

The Prime Minister, while speaking in Pushkar, said that he wanted to make India a developed country and the world's third strongest economic power by 2047. He also reiterated his focus on infrastructure development, border security and economic progress, saying this was possible because the people had elected a government with an absolute majority. The earlier trend of formation of alliances and coalitions, based on self-interests, had created its own compulsions and pushed the nation's welfare aside, he said, while exhorting the voters to give full majority for the BJP once again.

Mr. Modi said the inclusive development initiated by his government had ensured women's welfare in multiple sectors and ensured their respect, security and prosperity, as opposed to the Congress's neglect of women's empowerment.

Seeking votes for BJP candidates Bhagirath Choudhary (Ajmer) and Jyoti Mirdha (Nagaur), Mr. Modi expressed confidence that the party would maintain its record of winning all 25 Lok Sabha seats in the State.

Vote appeal: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath greet the gathering during a roadshow in Ghaziabad on Saturday. ANI

BJP must win all U.P. seats, Adityanath tells voters

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday described the State as the foremost battlefield in the Lok Sabha polls, appealing to voters to make sure that the BJP wins all 80 seats to fulfil the objective of 400-plus seats in the 2024 election.

Mr. Adityanath, who addressed three rallies in Saharanpur, Bijnor and Nagina, cited the Ram Temple and national security to garner support. He spoke about a recent report that has appeared in a British newspaper on how in 2021-22, terrorists were hounded and killed in Pakistan.

Mr. Adityanath said the message is clear that there is zero tolerance for terrorism and anarchy in India, adding that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India will lead the world in dealing with these challenges.

"Prime Minister Modi had promised after the Pulwama incident that the sacrifice of the sons of India will not go in vain. Today, the world is witnessing the power of India which knows how to penetrate the den of enemies and eliminate them," he said.

Three rescued, 7 held as CBI busts network of infant traffickers

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has busted a network of infant traffickers, rescuing three children and arresting seven accused people after searching seven locations in Delhi and Haryana.

"Two male infants of just 1.5 days and 15 days and one female child of one month have also been rescued by the CBI during the operation. Incriminating articles besides ₹5.5 lakh in cash have been seized," an agency official said.

The accused have been identified as Neeraj from Haryana, and Indu Pawar, Aslam, Pooja Kashyap, Ritu, Anjali, and Kavita from different parts of Delhi.

Fake adoption racket

The CBI has registered a case against 10 persons under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act.

They have been accused of being part of a network which trafficked infant children across the country for the purpose of adoption as well as for other illegal purposes.

According to the agency, the accused used advertisements on social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp groups to get in touch with childless couples who were keen to adopt babies.

The gang members would allegedly buy babies from their biological parents as well as from surrogate mothers and then sell these infant children at prices ranging from ₹4 lakh to ₹6 lakh per child.

"These accused are also allegedly involved in duping many childless couples of lakhs of rupees by creating fake documents related to adoption," the agency said.

Congress to step up its election campaign in the coming weeks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after the Congress released its manifesto, sources said the party has drawn up elaborate plans to popularise the manifesto by holding public rallies including joint rallies with top INDIA bloc leaders.

Sources said former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi will hold a joint rally with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin at Coimbatore on April 12 and similar rallies are also being planned in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra under the INDIA bloc banner.

On Saturday, Congress general secretary (communication) Jairam Ramesh claimed the Lok Sabha polls are "not fair" with Opposition parties being targeted but despite that, the INDIA bloc will get a clear majority in the elections.

"This election is not fair with action being taken against Opposition parties but despite this, we believe that the INDIA '*janbandhan*' [people's alliance] will get a clear mandate because of the public response to '*paanch nyay, pachees* guarantees' of the Congress and its allies which reflect the needs of the people," Mr. Ramesh said.

The Congress leader also targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh over their recent remarks that "new India" is capable of carrying out strikes inside enemy territory, the Congress communication chief called them "diversionary" tactics.

"Prime Minister always wants to divert attention from people's issues, be they farmers, youth, women. I want to remind Prime Minister that between 1940 and 1942, Hindutva ideologue Syama Prasad Mookerjee had formed a government in Bengal with the Muslim League... Mr. Modi always adopts divisive politics," he said in response to Mr. Modi's comments on the Congress manifesto, saying that it reflected the ethos of the Muslim League and the Communists.

The party also plans to hold press conferences across the country and Sonia Gandhi is likely to release a video on the manifesto. It has already printed eight crore "guarantee cards" in different languages including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Odia, Hindi, English, Bengali, Punjabi, Assamese, and Urdu.

Special teams have been assigned to look after the distribution of guarantee cards to people in several Parliamentary seats while general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal held a Zoom meeting to take feedback.

Though the party has stepped up its electoral efforts, announcing 241 candidates so far, it is yet to take a call on the candidates for Amethi and Rae Bareli in Uttar Pradesh.

Though the party has stepped up its electoral efforts, it is yet to take a call on the candidates for Amethi and Rae Bareli. NAGARA GOPAL

Four arrested for assaulting woman in Punjab

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

After a video surfaced of a 55-year-old woman being paraded semi-naked at Valtoha village in Tarn Taran district of Punjab, the police on Saturday arrested four persons in connection with the case.

The incident took place on March 31, around a month after the victim's son eloped with a woman.

"The victim was alone at her home when the girl's mother and others assaulted her... The video of the purported incident was also made viral through social media by the accused persons," Ashwani Kapur, Senior Superintendent of Police, Tarn Taran, said.

NIA team attacked in Bengal during probe into blast case, official sustains minor injuries

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

A team of National Investigation Agency (NIA) officials was allegedly attacked by local people on Saturday when it went to the Bhupatinagar area in East Medinipur district of West Bengal to conduct an early-morning search in connection with a bomb blast case. One official was allegedly injured in the attack.

The NIA said its officials arrested two key conspirators of the December 2022 blast "amid stiff resistance from an unruly crowd".

"The duo, Balai Charan Maity and Manobrata Jana, were arrested after extensive searches at five locations, including the house of Jana, where a crowd of local residents tried to obstruct the NIA team," the agency said in a press release.

"One NIA team member suffered minor injury and the agency's official vehicle was also damaged as some miscreants in the crowd assaulted them. The aggressive crowd tried to stop the NIA team and its security component from moving towards Bhupatinagar police station to complete the arrest formalities," it added. The NIA produced the two accused in a Kolkata court.

The Purba Medinipur police administration said it received a request from the NIA on Saturday morning to provide support for the investigation, but before it could provide any assistance, the NIA team visited the area with Central armed police personnel.

The NIA investigation at the house of a local Trinamool Congress leader has evoked strong political reactions from the State's ruling dispensation. The agency had issued notices to eight persons to appear before the agency, but none of them turned up.

'Political bias'

Speaking on the attack on the NIA team, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said: "What happens when people in a village see a stranger in the middle of the night? That is what happened [at Bhupatinagar]... The police were not informed... All this is being done to help the BJP in the polls."

Earlier, the Trinamool Congress had written to the Election Commission alleging that the NIA investigation ahead of the Lok Sabha election pointed to a political bias. The party alleged that the BJP leaders were in touch with NIA officials.

BJP leader Amit Malviya, who is also the State co-incharge for the party, said that all criminals in West Bengal enjoyed protection from the Trinamool. In a post on X, he said that "West Bengal continues to remain lawless, as ever" under Ms. Banerjee.

Bearing the brunt: A police vehicle after it was attacked by villagers during the NIA's investigation. PTI

ELECTIONS 2024

BSP leader hits out at Bhim Army chief

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) National Coordinator Akash Anand on Saturday kicked off his Lok Sabha campaign from Nagina seat in Uttar Pradesh.

He targeted the Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Azad, who is also a contender from the seat, without naming him, for "misleading" Dalit youth and wasting their career by involving them in protests leading to cases registered against them. Mr. Anand added that it was the BSP which believes in positive politics based on justice for marginalised sections while some elements are indulging in negative politics.

"He wanted to join the INDIA alliance, so that he could get a seat for himself, but his luck is so bad that attempt failed. But be aware of such elements who weaken our struggle," Mr. Anand said.

Akash Anand is BSP's candidate for the Nagina seat in Uttar Pradesh. FILE PHOTO

BJP's Raghunath Mohanty quits, may rejoin BJD

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Raghunath Mohanty resigned from the party fuelling speculation about his return to the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD).

Mr. Mohanty, who hails from Balasore district, was a Minister in the Naveen Patnaik government from 2006 to 2013. He faced a political crisis when his daughter-in-law levelled allegation of dowry torture against his family members.

In 2013, he along with his wife was arrested from Kolkata. In 2014, he was denied ticket from Basta which he represented consecutively since 1990.

He joined the BJP just before the 2019 election. But lost the State Assembly elections on BJP ticket.

According to sources, Mr. Mohanty may join the BJD.

"Who is the best finisher in cricket? Dhoni. If anyone asks who is best finisher in politics, I will say it is Rahul. This is the reason leaders have left Cong.

RAJNATH SINGH
Defence Minister

In Khajuraho, INDIA to back new candidate

The Opposition INDIA bloc on Saturday said it will support one of the candidates in the fray in Khajuraho Lok Sabha seat in Madhya Pradesh.

The announcement comes a day after the nomination form of Samajwadi Party leader Meera Yadav was rejected. PTI

"If Nirmala and Jaishankar claim they are Tamils, then let them contest in T.N.... and raise the Katchatheevu issue. Why did they not contest?

P. CHIDAMBARAM
Congress leader

Making promises: Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge with party leaders Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi at a public meeting in Jaipur on Saturday. PTI

Modi considers himself above the nation, says Sonia Gandhi

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi on Saturday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government at the Centre of destroying the democratic institutions, built with hard work, by the weapons of political power and tearing apart the dignity of the nation. Ms. Gandhi said a conspiracy was also being hatched to change the Constitution.

Accompanied by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and other party leaders, Ms. Gandhi publicly launched the party's Lok Sabha election manifesto, titled *Nyay Patra* (document of justice) and released in New Delhi on Friday, at a rally organised at Vidyadhar Nagar Stadium here.

Ms. Gandhi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who considered himself "above the nation", was undermining democracy and resorting to various tactics to intimidate and threaten the Opposition leaders to make them join the BJP.

"This is nothing less than dictatorship and we will give a befitting reply [to it]," Ms. Gandhi said. She said the BJP government's only achievements during the last 10 years were the rising unemployment, inflation, economic crisis and inequality.

Ms. Gandhi said the present spell of frustration would soon give way to the hope for betterment.

BJP has never faced divisions, says Fadnavis

Press Trust of India
NAGPUR

The BJP was not established to make anyone the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister and hence never faced an internal division, said Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday. The BJP leader claimed that theirs is the only national party in the country's history that has not experienced a split.

Addressing party workers during an event here to mark the 44th foundation day of the BJP, Mr. Fadnavis asked the cadres to work as the soldiers of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make India a developed country.

"This party was never made for making anyone the PM or CM or any other post but was established to create an ideology that will serve the nation's interests," he claimed.

Later, speaking to presspersons on the sidelines of the programme, Mr. Fadnavis took a jibe at the Opposition groupings Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) and INDIA bloc, likening them to a train with an engine but no compartments. "Everyone is going their way with no consensus among the constituents," he claimed.

Dravidian party-led coalitions have dominated vote share in T.N.

In 1984, combined vote share of the DMK, AIADMK fronts hit a high of 96.91%; low point was in 2014, when a BJP-led third front helped limit the Dravidian majors' alliances to just 71% of votes, an analysis of the State's voting patterns shows

IN FOCUS

T. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

Coalitions that included Tamil Nadu's two major and opposing Dravidian forces – the DMK and the AIADMK – have claimed most of the State's vote share in the 12 Lok Sabha elections held since 1977.

The combined vote share of the two coalitions hit a high of 96.91% in 1984, and never went lower than in 2014, when they garnered 71.07%. In 2014, the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) contested all of the State's 39 Lok Sabha seats independently; the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam has never gone solo since 1977.

An analysis of the State's voting patterns shows that in the five elections held between 1977 and 1991, the combined vote share of the two opposing fronts was 90% and above. In each of those elections, barring the one held in 1980, the AIADMK had aligned itself with the Congress. In 1980, the AIADMK had an electoral understanding with the Janata Party and the two Left parties, while the DMK allied with the Congress.

On almost on all other occasions, the State's present ruling party partnered with non-Congress parties such as the Janata Party, Janata Dal, and the two Left parties – the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the CPI(M). Except in 1977 when it was part of the AIADMK-Congress combine, the CPI has always allied with the DMK.

Vote shares

The table lists DMK and AIADMK's vote share along with the vote share secured by allies

Year	DMK's vote share	AIADMK's vote share	Combined vote share of coalitions with seats won in brackets
1977	18.61%	30.04%	DMK+ 37.84% (**4**) | AIADMK+ 56.91% (**35**)
1980	23.01%	25.38%	DMK+ 54.63% (**37**) | AIADMK+ 40.14 (**2**)
1984	25.90%	18.36%	DMK+ 37.04% (**2**) | AIADMK+ 59.87% (**37**)
1989	26.66%	17.12%	DMK+ 33.78% (**1**) | AIADMK+ 56.98% (**38**)
1991	22.69%	18.10%	DMK+ 30.12% (**0**) | AIADMK+ 60.67% (**39**)
1996	25.63%	7.84%	DMK+ 54.96% (**39**) | AIADMK+ 26.1% (**0**)
1998	20.08%	25.89%	DMK+ 42.72% (**8**) | AIADMK+ 47.48% (**30**)
1999	23.13%	25.68%	DMK+ 45.89% (**26**) | AIADMK+ 41.69% (**13**)
2004	24.60%	29.77%	DMK+ 57.4 (**39**) | AIADMK+ 34.84% (**0**)
2009	25.09%	22.88%	DMK+ 42.53% (**27**) | AIADMK+ 37.3% (**12**)
2014	23.57%	44.27%	DMK+ 26.8% (**0**) | AIADMK 44.27% (**37**)
2019	33.53%	19.40%	DMK+ 53.21 (**38**) | AIADMK+ 30.55 (**1**)

New entrants

The entry of the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) into the electoral fray in 1989 caused a marginal reduction in the combined vote share of the fronts that included the DMK and the AIADMK. In fact, seven years later, when the "anti-Jayalalithaa wave" was at its peak in 1996, their collective vote share went down to about 81%. This could be attributed to the presence of the coalition led by the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), the PMK, and the BJP, the three of which had secured around 15% of votes, even though they each faced the electorate on their own.

However, there was an improvement in the combined vote share of the fronts of the two Dravidian majors in 1998, when the AIADMK staged a comeback and its alliance bagged 30 seats. Again, there was a dip the next year when the Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar), which had contested the 1996 and 1998 elections as an ally of the DMK, formed its own coalition and netted about 9.4% of votes.

The participation of the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK) in the 2009 Lok Sabha poll again disturbed the situation as it obtained a little over 10% of votes.

The trend continued five years later, with a perceptible drop in the combined vote share of the fronts of the State's principal players, though the AIADMK grabbed 37 out of the 39 seats. The third front, which included the BJP, the PMK, the DMDK, and the MDMK, got 18% of votes in 2014.

Five years ago, in 2019, the Dravidian majors had all the established parties under their respective folds. Yet, the collective vote share of the two coalitions didn't touch the 90% mark, only reaching 84%. Three non-allied parties – the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK), the Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM), and the Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) – contested on their own, securing 12.85% of votes.

This time too, the BJP has established a front that includes the PMK, the TMC (M), the AMMK, and a couple of other parties. While the MNM is extending support to the DMK-led front, the NTK is contesting without any allies. It remains to be seen how much of the State's pie they can carve out in 2024.

D. Raja

CPI promises to scrap CAA, Agnipath in its manifesto

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Saturday released its manifesto for the Lok Sabha election, calling for a change of government at the Centre.

"Unemployment and price rise have become the biggest woes for the people. BJP's rule has resulted in unprecedented concentration of wealth at the top while the poor are pushed to destitution," said party general secretary D. Raja.

"The CPI will raise the demand of scrapping the contractual and derogatory Agnipath Scheme," it said. It will work towards complete restoration of the Old Pension Scheme; abolition of the CAA; and will continue to fight to remove the arbitrary cap of 50% on reservations.

It aims to bring Central agencies such as the ED and the CBI under the purview of Parliament to ensure the impartiality of their probes.

5 suspended for giving 'abusive' reply to AAP

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Days after the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Haryana unit alleged that its application to hold two election campaign programmes in the Kaithal had been rejected by the authorities with "abusive language" in the reply, the Governor of Haryana suspended Braham Prakash, Sub Divisional Officer (Civil), Kaithal.

Deputy Commissioner of Kaithal, Prashant Panwar, on Saturday suspended five people for their suspected involvement in the matter. An FIR has also been lodged against the accused persons, he said.

Referring to the incident as "shameful" and "derogatory", Sushil Gupta, Haryana unit chief of the AAP said that the party had sought permission for two election programmes in Kaithal on Sunday.

"Our first application was rejected with a comment – '*ko ni denge*' (we will not give)," Mr. Gupta said. He added that a "highly abusive word" was used as a comment while rejecting the second application.

'BJP wants a Russian-style oligarchy; Cong. adheres to democratic values'

Deputy Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha and the party's candidate from Jorhat says BJP is arm-twisting everyone, from those in the corporate sector to the common people, and is employing a use-and-throw policy for its allies

INTERVIEW

Gaurav Gogoi

Rahul Karmakar
JORHAT

The rejuvenation of a battered Congress in Assam depends largely on Gaurav Gogoi, the Deputy Leader of the party in the Lok Sabha and its face in the northeast. After Kaliabor, the constituency he represented twice, became a casualty of the 2023 delimitation exercise, the Congress has fielded him from Jorhat, which his father and former Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi represented thrice. He says the INDIA bloc will make it tough for the BJP-led NDA to achieve the 400-seat target. Excerpts:

Is the INDIA bloc in order as allies have fielded candidates against the Congress?

The Trinamool Congress is a rival in Meghalaya's Tura while the Aam Aadmi Party has fielded candidates against our party in Lakhimpur and our ally Assam Jatiya Parishad in Dibrugarh. But people in the country understand that we may have to be friends in one place and opponents in others – like the AAP and the Congress in Delhi and Punjab, and the Left Front and the Congress in Kerala. The people have also found out that the BJP employs the use-and-throw policy for its allies as has been the case with the Akali Dal in Punjab and the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu. The INDIA bloc is in better order than the NDA is in.

Has the Congress campaign been affected by the government's punitive measures?

It is not just the politicians or political parties. The BJP is arm-twisting everyone from those in the corporate sector to the common people through riders on various schemes. They are trying to enforce a Russian-style oligarchy while Congress is adhering to the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution.

How much do the Muslims and Adivasis matter for the Congress in elections?

We do not believe in the politics of polarisation like the BJP. The Bharat Jodo Yatra showed that the Congress believes in bringing communities together and working for social justice without fancy slogans.

All communities matter to us, and not just for elections. There is a perception that the Adivasis or tea plantation workers have gravitated toward the BJP, but the youth of the community are a frustrated lot today with the industry in a crisis and the lack of employment opportunities. The diversity within the Adivasis is also being challenged by the imposition of the cultural and religious values that they (BJP) believe in. Rahul Gandhi's promise of a caste census for better distribution of resources is gaining popularity among the community.

Is the BJP working with the AIUDF to beat the Congress in Muslim-dominated constituencies?

What Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM (All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen) is doing in other parts of the country, Badruddin Ajmal's AIUDF (All India United Democratic Front) is doing in Assam – aiding the BJP as its B-team to achieve the Congress-*mukt* Bharat goal. But the voters they have targeted have seen through this design.

Can INDIA bloc prevent the BJP from achieving the 400-seat target?

It depends upon the belief of the people in our promise to ensure an India where freedom of expression and autonomy of various institutions are ensured. Setting a target implies some kind of a design to win at any cost.

INBRIEF

J.P. Nadda and five others take oath as Rajya Sabha members

BJP national president J.P. Nadda and five other newly elected members of the Rajya Sabha took oath on Saturday. "Vice-President of India & Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar administered oath to Shri Jagat Prakash Narayan Lal Nadda ji as the elected Member of Rajya Sabha in Parliament House today," Mr. Dhankhar's office said in a post on X. Among others who also took oath include Ashokrao Shankarrao Chavan (Maharashtra), Chunnilal Garasiya (Rajasthan), Anil Kumar Yadav Mandadi (Telangana), Sushmita Dev and Mohammad Nadimul Haque (both West Bengal). PTI

ED attaches property worth ₹1 cr. in J&K paper leak case

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday said it has attached property worth ₹1 crore in the Jammu and Kashmir sub-inspector examination paper leak case. The exam was conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Service Selection Board to recruit police sub-inspectors in the Union Territory. A spokesperson said the agency attached movable properties of the accused, Yatin Yadav and his associate Lokesh Kumar, under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002. The ED has alleged that Mr. Yadav and others had reaped monetary benefits from the paper leak. Around 1,200 sub-inspectors were to be recruited in the drive whose selection list was later cancelled.

ED attaches assets worth ₹1.8 crore in a land case

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Mumbai Zonal Office, attached assets worth of ₹1.81 crore in a case involving the late builder Yusuf Mohammed Lakdawala and others who had conspired to illegally acquire land using forged documents. The assets in the form of immovable properties in Maval and Lonavala were seized under provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, the ED said on Saturday. "ED initiated probe based on an FIR registered by Economic Offence Wing, Mumbai, against Yusuf Mohammed Lakdawala and others in relation to criminal conspiracy to illegally acquire a land by submitting forged documents," said ED officials.

NIA raids multiple locations in anti-India conspiracy case

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday carried out raids at multiple locations in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar against the CPI (Maoist) in an 'anti-India' conspiracy case, officials said. The raids were carried out by NIA teams on the premises of accused and suspected persons at 11 locations in Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh and one location in Kaimur district of Bihar. An NIA spokesperson said several digital devices along with incriminating documents like pamphlets of the proscribed Naxal outfit were seized during the searches. The NIA had in November last year taken over the probe in the case relating to the arrest of five persons following recovery of arms, ammunition, and literature of CPI (Maoist). PTI

SUDOKU

2				6		7		9
					7		1	2
9			2	4				3
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1				5	8			7
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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

2	7	4	5	3	6	8	9	1
1	6	3	9	4	8	2	7	5
9	5	8	1	2	7	3	4	6
4	8	9	7	6	2	1	5	3
3	1	7	4	8	5	6	2	9
6	2	5	3	9	1	7	8	4
8	9	6	2	1	4	5	3	7
7	3	2	6	5	9	4	1	8
5	4	1	8	7	3	9	6	2

Translation app helps six Indians escape Russian war

Dhinesh Kallungal
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A translation app developed by tech giant Google has helped six youth from Kerala narrowly escape from being recruited in Russia to be engaged in the war in Ukraine.

This comes amid reports that several Indians have been duped by recruiting agents into fighting for Russia.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Jaison George (name changed), a native of Thekkumbhagam in Kollam, said he and five others reached Russia on February 19.

Service charges

They were offered security jobs by the agent from Thiruvananthapuram, who had earlier trafficked four youth from the Kerala capital to Russia. "Soon after we landed in Moscow, a man took us to a hostel and to a military base in northeast Russia. During the journey to the base, we were told that we would man the Army's security installations and hence should undergo a three-week military training," Mr. George, a commerce graduate, said, adding that the agent "charged each of us his service charge, ranging from $1,350 to $1,500".

The next day, they were told to sign a one-year agreement before joining the service. The agreement was written in Russian. They were told to sign it quickly.

"Seeing the haste to complete the proceedings, we sought time to read the documents," he said.

Hot spot: A car burns at the site of a Russian missile strike at Zaporizhzhia in Ukraine. REUTERS

As frontline soldiers

"As we read the document with the help of Google Translate, we realised the magnitude of the trap we were in. It was clearly mentioned that we had been recruited to fight against the Ukraine Army as frontline soldiers. Upon successful completion of the term, we would be offered permanent resident status in Russia and Russian passport, among other things. Without a second thought, we tore up the agreement and sought permission to return to India," he said.

They were shifted to a hostel nearby. There they reached out to a sub-agent in Thiruvananthapuram, who told them not to sign the agreement. He then arranged flight tickets for them. On February 26, they landed in India. Soon after, one tried to commit suicide as he had paid ₹6 lakh to the agents. The sub-agent gave the youth a sum of ₹2.5 lakh.

All the victims hail from poor families and had borrowed from moneylenders. Mr. George has been staying in Mumbai since his return. "I can't go home empty-handed as my father, an auto driver, had borrowed the money from a loan shark. Here, I am trying to find a job. Otherwise, my entire family will have to commit suicide," he said.

Binu Panicker, president, All Moscow Malayalees Association, who helped them get back home, said the association realised the gravity of the situation only after seeing a copy of the agreement they shared.

Mr. Panicker, along with the Indian Embassy, had also helped repatriate two other youth from Kerala who were similarly tricked into fighting for Russia and were injured in the war zone. He said efforts were on to bring back two more persons trapped in Russia. *(Those in distress may contact Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline 011-40769002)*

Climate activist and Leh Apex Body call off march to border

The aim of the march was to highlight the plight of Changpa tribes, they say and accuse government of trying to suppress the peaceful movement

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Strong stance: Activist Sonam Wangchuk, who recently completed a 21-day hunger strike, speaks to the media in Leh. FILE PHOTO

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and the Leh Apex Body (LAB) decided to call off the border march on Sunday, as the Ladakh Lieutenant-Governor's administration stepped up measures to block the proposed event from going forward.

"In view of the (recent) developments and the fact that the whole nation now knows about the reality of our pasture lands at the borders, the leaders of the apex body today decided to call off the Pashmina March on 7th April. The ongoing peaceful fast will however continue. We thank all the leaders and people who came here from different parts of the country," the LAB and Mr. Wangchuk said in a joint statement on Saturday.

They said the purpose of the 'Pashmina March' was to highlight the plight of the Changpa nomadic tribes who are losing thousands of square kilometres of their land "due to Chinese incursion in the north and our own corporates in the south".

"This purpose seems already fulfilled even before the march began due to the suppression attempts and over-reaction of the government," the statement read.

In the past 24 hours, the L-G administration has imposed Section 144 of the CrPC in Leh to disallow any assembly without permission, curtailed Internet speed, and rounded up supporters of Mr. Wangchuk. "Under these circumstances, chances of violence are very high, which could then be used to label this peaceful movement anti-national," it added.

'War zone'

Earlier in the day, Mr. Wangchuk, spearheading a peaceful struggle for Ladakh's Statehood and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, termed the situation in Leh "grim and fearful".

"Leh is being turned into a war zone with disproportionate force, barricades, and smoke grenades. There is a lot of fear. The situation could go out of control," said Mr. Wangchuk, who recently completed a 21-day protest fast.

He accused the Lieutenant-Governor's administration of forcing youth and activists, including singers, to "sign bonds or face arrests". "There have only been peaceful protests in the past 32 days in Leh. The move to impose Section 144 is only if there is fear of bloodshed. We have been peaceful all along," he said.

The activist expressed his resentment with the latest government circulars that have directions for teargas shells and smoke grenades to be allotted to security forces in riot gear to stop the march.

ED attaches assets worth ₹37 cr. in bank fraud case

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets worth ₹36.66 crore belonging to Rakesh Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan of Veena Developers under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, in a bank fraud case. The fraud case involves Rakesh Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan, who are the promoters of Housing Development Infrastructure Ltd. (HDIL), along with other individuals associated with Mack Star Marketing Private Limited.

The ED, in a press release on Saturday, stated that the attached assets are in the form of commercial properties consisting of two office units.

"The ED initiated investigation based on a FIR registered CBI (ACB), Mumbai against Rakesh Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan Promoters of HDIL, and others for siphoning off the loan to the tune of ₹200 crore sanctioned by Yes Bank to one M/s Mack Star Marketing Pvt. Ltd. Further on the basis of a complaint filed by M/s Mack Star Marketing Pvt. Ltd, N.M. Joshi Marg Police Station, Mumbai, registered a fresh FIR wherein it is alleged that Wadhawans had illegallysold several office units in Kaledonia building owned by M/s Mack Star Marketing Pvt. Ltd, causing wrongful loss to Mack Star of over ₹300 crore," the ED said.

Speaking up: Rajput community in Rajkot demanding removal of BJP leader Parshottam Rupala's candidature. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Rajput community in Gujarat intensifies protest against Rupala

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

The ongoing protests by Rajputs in Gujarat against Union Minister Parshottam Rupala's controversial remarks against them escalated on Saturday with a rally at Rajkot drawing many from the community and protesters in Khambhalia attempting to disrupt a BJP event.

The protesters in Rajkot demanded the withdrawal of the candidature of Mr. Rupala's, BJP's nominee for the seat. Thousands of protesters marched to the Collector's office to submit a memorandum expressing this demand.

The rally included a large number of women, dressed in saffron sarees, and raising slogans against the BJP leader, who had been facing protests since March 22 when he first made the remarks.

"This protest will not stop till the demand is met and the candidate is replaced," Karansjnh Chavda, a Rajput community leader, told presspersons after a meeting with representatives of various caste groups from the Kshatriya (Rajput) community.

According to sources, smaller protests or meetings were being held by the aggrieved community members in villages and smaller towns and the demand for the Union Minister's removal as the party candidate was growing.

In Khambhalia, approximately 100 protesters made their way to a public meeting of State BJP president C.R. Paatil and showed black flags, raised slogans and upturned chairs.

Purported video clips of the event went viral on social media and on local channels in the State.

The State BJP had yet to make any statement about the incident in Khambhalia and the protests in Rajkot. Former Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said that "the community would show a large heart and forgive the Union Minister who has apologised twice".

Kerala researchers working to dispel myths around bats

Mini Muringatheri
THRISSUR

Myth, superstition, and zoonotic diseases such COVID-19 and the Nipah virus infection, have created a negative impression of bats. The fallout is that these nocturnal, flying mammals are losing their habitat and their numbers are falling.

On a clear-the-air campaign for bats, a team from Kerala is on a mission to train the next generation of bat researchers and to create awareness of the species' diversity and ecosystem functions.

The Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment and the Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI), Peechi, Thrissur, have recently organised training programmes on bat taxonomy, acoustics and biogeography.

The campaign originated from the pressing need to address the challenges posed by emerging zoonotic diseases and the ongoing threats faced by bat populations, including habitat loss and the cutting down of fruit bat roosts.

Peroth Balakrishnan, head of the Department of Wildlife Biology at KFRI, said, "The programme served as a platform to equip researchers with the necessary skills and knowledge to tackle these challenges head on. We conducted such a campaign last year too. We are proud to continue fostering passionate young individuals dedicated to bat research and conservation."

Sreehari Raman, Assistant Professor at the Kerala Agricultural University, who was part of the programme stressed the significance of taxonomy training in bat conservation, stating, "Taxonomy forms the foundation of bat research and conservation efforts. Proper identification and classification of bat species are essential for implementing effective conservation strategies and understanding their ecological roles."

On a mission: Participants at the training programme on bat research held recently at KFRI, Thrissur. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A specialist from Thailand offered a session on bat taxonomy. Pipat Soisook, research lecturer and curator of mammals, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Natural History Museum in Thailand, emphasised the need for collaboration among South Asian researchers on bats. "Many bat species overlap in the South Asian region, making collaboration among researchers imperative. By sharing data, resources, and expertise, we can enhance our understanding of these creatures and work towards their conservation," he said.

Modern tools

Rohit Chakravarty from the Nature Conservation Foundation and Bat Conservation International shared insights into bat acoustics and monitoring techniques, emphasising the importance of employing modern tools for studying these nocturnal creatures. The programme also delved into the topics such as biodiversity genomics, social structure, and mating systems in bats, with sessions led by Balaji Chattopadhyay and Kritika M. Garg from Ashoka University. Baheerathan Murugavel, a research associate at IISER Mohali, offered insights on the use of telemetry techniques for studying the movement ecology of bats.

Dr. Peroth, along with wildlife biologist Nithin Divakar, discussed citizen science and participatory approaches in bat conservation, highlighting the role of community engagement in monitoring and conserving bat species.

Parvathy Venugopal, Survey Officer, National Bat Monitoring Programme of the Bat Conservation Trust, U.K., shared the story of U.K.'s longest-running citizen science programme and the potential lessons that could be drawn from it.

The programme was supported by the Conservation Leadership Programme and Bat Conservation International.

INBRIEF

Indian Bank posts 12% growth in total business for FY24

Indian Bank reported a 12% growth year-on-year to ₹12.23 lakh crore in total business for FY24. Total deposits rose 11% to ₹6.89 lakh crore, said the public sector lender in a regulatory filing. Gross advances grew by 12.7% to ₹5.34 lakh crore, while Current Account and Savings Account (CASA) deposits climbed 8.1% to ₹2.82 lakh crore. The bank said these were provisional figures for FY24 and subject to audit by statutory central auditors of the bank.

Chola Investment logged 33% growth in FY disbursements

Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Co. Ltd.'s overall disbursements grew 33% y-o-y to ₹88,300 crore for FY24. Vehicle finance business climbed 21% to ₹48,200 crore while loans against property increased 44% to ₹13,400 crore. Home loans rose 64% to ₹6,300 crore while micro, small and medium enterprise loans grew 27% to ₹8,100 crore. Assets under management grew about 35% to ₹1,53,000 crore. The firm said these were provisional figures and subject to audit.

Embassy REIT to buy Chennai business park for ₹1,269-crore

Embassy REIT, the country's first listed REIT, on Saturday announced the acquisition of Embassy Splendid TechZone Asset, a Grade-A business park, in Chennai for an Enterprise Value of ₹1,269 crore. The proposed acquisition would mark Embassy REIT's entry into Chennai said the firm in a statement. Embassy REIT also said it planned to raise unit capital of ₹2,500 crore via institutional placement to fund the acquisition and cut portfolio leverage from 30% to 27%.

'IMF staff consistently inaccurate on India's growth forecasts'

India's representative on Fund's board rebuffs IMF spokeperson; alleges 'huge error margins' in IMF staff's India growth estimates Vs. official data

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Hitting back: Mr. Subramanian, citing his estimates, said data clearly showed whose forecast was more accurate. BUSINESSLINE

India's former Chief Economic Advisor, now serving as its executive director on the board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), hit out at the Fund's staff on Saturday for putting out 'consistently inaccurate' growth estimates for the country in recent years, two days after the IMF distanced itself from his assertions that India can grow at 8% till 2047.

In a statement on X, Krishnamurthy V. Subramanian, India's representative on the IMF board since November 2022, said his 'predictions' about India's growth had been accurate in contrast to IMF staff estimates. He was responding to a post about a report on the IMF spokesperson's comments made at a briefing on Thursday.

Asked for the IMF's take on Mr. Subramanian projecting a growth of 8% for India, which was different from the Fund's projections, IMF spokesperson Julie Kozack sought to explain the different roles at IMF and stressed that as of January, it expected the country's medium term growth to be about 6.5%, which may be revised in the coming weeks.

"First, I will just explain the different roles at IMF. We do have an executive board that is made up of executive directors who are representatives of countries... And that is distinct, of course, from the work of the IMF staff. So, the views conveyed in the particular article by Mr. Subramanian were in his role as India's representative at the IMF," Ms. Kozack had pointed out.

"Our growth projections as of January were for medium term growth of 6.5%," she had said.

In a terse response, the former CEA said IMF staff's estimate of India's growth rate has been "consistently INACCURATE" as all staff estimates have been of less than 7%, while India's growth has been more than 7% during his tenure. "In contrast, I've made accurate predictions. See my Sep-21 prediction - Expect more than 7% growth for India this decade: Actual growth FY21-22=9.7%; FY22-23=7.0%; FY23-24 (estimate)=7.6%. The Data speaks!" he said.

"In contrast, check IMF staff predictions. For FY 23-24, in Nov-22 and Jan-23, IMF staff predicted growth=6.1%. In Apr-23, they lowered it to 5.9%. In Nov-23, they predicted 6.3%. Actual growth, IMO (In My Opinion), will be ~8%. So, IMF staff's error margins are HUGE: 1.9% in Nov-22 & Jan-23 estimates, 2.1% in Apr-23 estimate, and 1.7% in Nov-23 estimates. Similarly, even FY23-24 growth estimates of IMF staff <7%. Data clearly shows whose prediction is more accurate!" Mr. Subramanian posted.

Vistara asserts 98% pilots sign up to new contracts as several said to reject terms

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Vistara's CEO Vinod Kannan on Saturday asserted that "over 98% of pilots" had signed new contracts entailing a new pay structure, which has been cited by industry sources as a key issue that led to a spate of recent flight cancellations and delays at the full service airline that is set to merge with Air India. The industry sources, however, contended that the number of Vistara pilots who had not accepted the new pay structure announced in February were far more in number than the airline was publicly admitting.

'Some have concerns'

"Over 98% of pilots have signed the new contract," Mr. Kannan said in an e-mailed statement to *The Hindu*. "Having said that, we are aware that some pilots have some concerns and queries regarding the contract. We are engaging with them to clarify and resolve the same," he stated, adding that this had, however, 'not caused any visible spike in attrition' among pilots.

The CEO, who had held a town hall with pilots on April 4 to address their concerns after the airline was forced to cancel 150 flights and suffer delays to more than 200 other flights in the preceding three to four days, is reported to have told participants at that event that 270 pilots had not signed the contract, according to multiple people who had participated at the online meeting and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

This would imply that almost a fourth of Vistara's total cockpit crew were opposed to the terms of the new contract, which cuts the guaranteed minimum flying allowance from 70 hours to 40 hours resulting in a monthly pay cut of ₹80,000 to ₹1.4 lakh for First Officers (FOs or junior pilots). The airline has over 1,100 pilots on its rolls.

Acknowledging the gravity of the recent disruptions to the airline's flight schedules and its impact on customers, Mr. Kannan said in the statement, "We are addressing this on a war footing... we are continuing to hire more pilots and are also carefully scaling back our operations slightly to provide the much needed resilience and a buffer in the rosters." He added Vistara hoped to stabilise operations "by this weekend".

Wipro names Srini Pallia as CEO after Delaporte steps down

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Wipro Ltd. on Saturday appointed Srini Pallia as CEO and MD with immediate effect after the firm said Thierry Delaporte, who took the IT services provider through a significant transformation in the last four years, had stepped down to pursue passions outside the workplace.

Mr. Delaporte was Wipro's first expatriate CEO and played a significant role in leading it during tough market conditions triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, said an analyst.

Wipro veteran

Mr. Pallia, a member of the Wipro Executive Board, recently served as the CEO for Americas, Wipro's biggest and fastest-growing strategic market.

In this role, he oversaw diverse industry sectors, established the company's vision and implemented growth strategies, resulting in increased market shares within these sectors, the company said adding

Mr. Pallia, who joined Wipro in 1992, had held many leadership positions.

He holds a bachelor's degree in engineering, and a master's in management studies from Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. He graduated from Harvard Business School's Leading Global Businesses Executive Program, and the Advanced Leadership Program at McGill Executive Institute.

'Apparel exports may see mild recovery in FY25, after a sharp fall in FY24'

Adding colour: Demand revival likely to lead to a pick-up in capital expenditure in 2024-25. THE HINDU

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

After a sharp decline in 2023-24, India's apparel exports may see a muted recovery this year as the U.S. and EU retailers are expected to restock inventories, rating agency ICRA said in a research note.

In the first 11 months of 2023-24, exports of ready-made garments were down 11.4% at a little more than $13 billion. The U.S. and EU account for 55% of global apparel trade, and the U.S. alone slashed such imports by 22% during calendar year 2023.

"ICRA expects the apparel-exporting companies to report a recovery in 2024-25 on a lower base, with replenishment of stock in the U.S. and the EU regions," said Priyesh Ruparelia, vice president and co-group head for corporate sector ratings at the firm, who expects a muted 8%-9% uptick in revenues of firms tracked by ICRA.

Some evidence of this was visible in February's foreign trade numbers, with ready-made garment exports rising 4.88% to a little over $1.47 billion.

Low operating margins

A decline in cotton yarn prices has not helped firms' profit margins. ICRA reckoned that apparel producers' operating margins moderated to about 9.8-10% in 2023-24 from 11.3% in the previous year, thanks to a contraction in volumes and weaker operating performance.

Cotton yarn prices averaged about 23% lower in the first nine months of FY24 compared with FY23 and 1% below the past five-year's average. Despite rationalisation in raw material prices, the same is getting passed on to the customers and that is expected to continue, owing to a weak demand environment, ICRA said.

While a difficult operating environment had pushed back large capex investments for most players, the rating agency believes the expected demand revival in this financial year and industry players' strategies to take advantage of the China Plus One movement, could lead to a pick-up in capital expenditure in 2024-25.

56 of the 64 applicants for new investments under the Production-linked Incentive (PLI) scheme have completed the mandatory criteria for formation of a new company and received approval letters from the government. An investment of around ₹2,119 crore by 30 selected applicants has been made till September 2023, ICRA said, adding that 12 more applications from investors under the scheme are under evaluation.

Red Sea issue

Commenting on the impact of the ongoing Red Sea conflict, the rating agency said no immediate cost implication was being felt by apparel exporters operating on a FOB (Free On Board) basis, except for the delays in shipments by about 15 days from their original transit times.

"Sustained continuance of this face-off would have a direct impact on apparel export volumes and their realisations due to higher costs for the customers," the rating agency added.

India's PC market to double in 5 to 7 years: HP

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

India's Personal Computer (PC) market has been growing exponentially after the COVID-19 pandemic and the total addressable market is expected to more than double in the next five to seven years, forecast Palo Alto-based HP Inc.

As per IDC shared data, 14.9 million PCs were sold in the country during calendar year 2023.

Vineet Gehani, Senior Director-Consumer Sales, HP India told *The Hindu*, "From pre-COVID to post-COVID, the industry saw 1.5x growth in sales revenue as more and more people started feeling the need for smart working, smart living, smart learning and smart earning and still be connected and mobile."

The country's PC expansion rose to 18% after the pandemic from 11-12% pre-pandemic. "The PC market has been seeing quantum growth after the pandemic, however, the penetration is still only 18% and that means a huge growth opportunity," he said.

Mr. Gehani said the two key segments that are going to drive growth will include first-time buyers who currently use mobile phones and other form factors such as tablets; and refresh customers who bought PCs some years ago and now want to explore much faster and smarter devices through an exchange or upgrade.

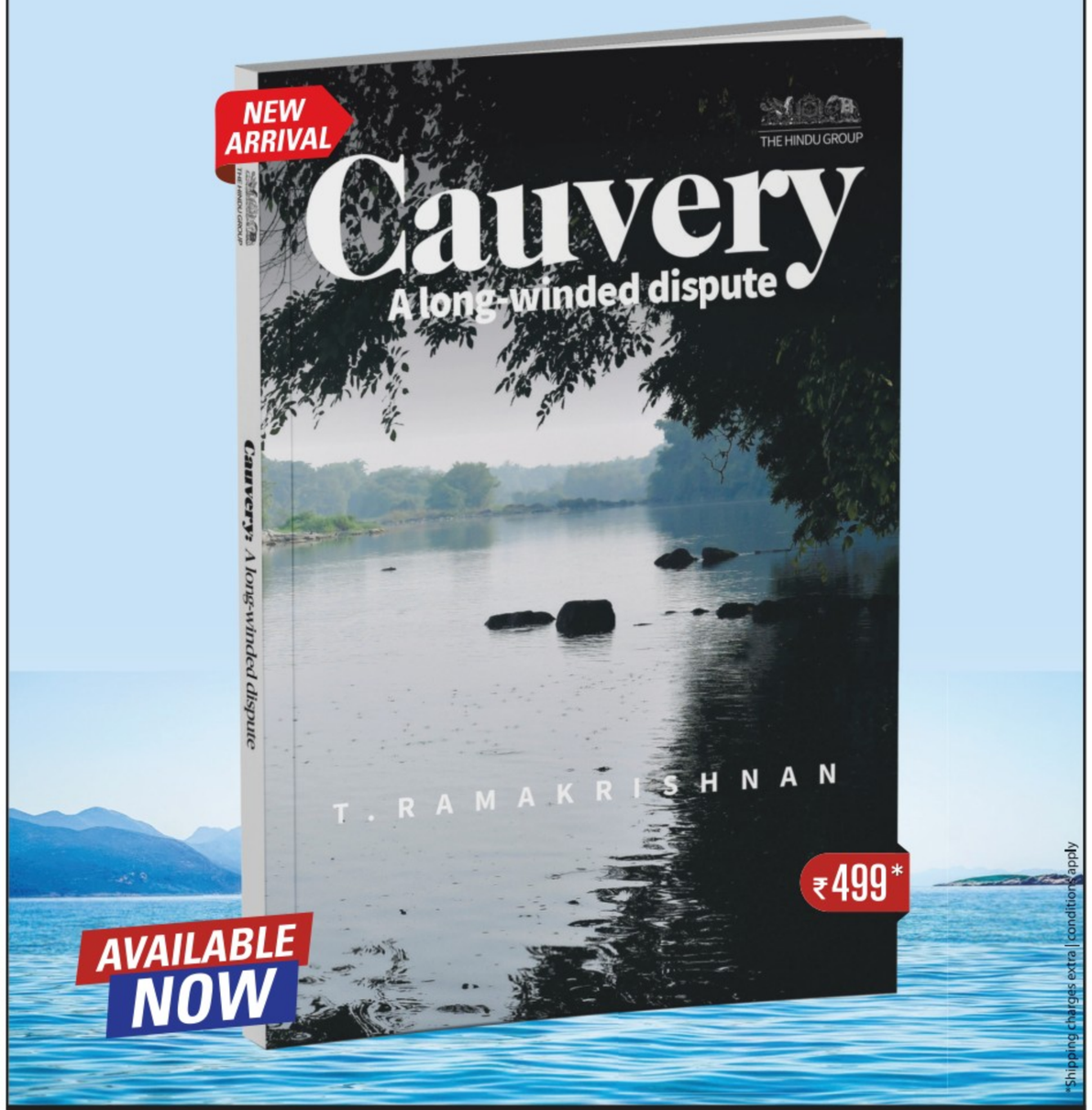
HP said Tier III and smaller cities and towns across the country were ready for greater PC penetration and these newer and rapidly-growing markets were expected to bring in significant growth momentum.

THE HINDU GROUP

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

RESOLVING A VEXATIOUS ISSUE

Finding a solution to the vexatious Cauvery dispute has been a challenge to even the collective wisdom of veteran politicians, seasoned policy makers, experts and farmers. It even tested the strength of India's federal structure at times. After bickering among riparian constituents of the Cauvery basin for over a century and exhausting all avenues, judiciary, finally, had to do the task of apportioning the quantum of water for each riparian party. This book gives an account of how the dispute evolved over the years, especially after the 1924 Agreement between Madras Presidency and the Princely State of Mysore. It also drives home the point that the last word has not yet been said on the issue. Apart from the subject of water sharing, the work discusses challenges facing the river on various fronts, including environment.



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Cracking the mystery of how the chemical origins of life formed

The Hindu Bureau

Heat flows through cracks in rocks, such as those found in volcanoes or geothermal systems, can purify molecules relevant to the chemical origins of life, laboratory experiments described in a study published in the journal *Nature* reveal. The study offers an explanation for how the first building blocks of life may have formed from complex chemical mixtures.

The formation of biopolymers and their components was a key moment in the origins of life on early Earth.

However, these pathways are hard to replicate in the laboratory. Often, the number of by-products forming from these complex reactions means the formation of biologically relevant building blocks occurs in near-negligible amounts. Previous attempts to devise a purification method have been limited by their specificity, being unable to isolate a wide range of molecules at once.

Christof Mast from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Munich, Germany and others use geologically inspired chambers with miniscule cracks to separate over 50 molecules relevant to prebiotic life from complex mixtures of amino acids, nucleobases, nucleotides and other compounds.

Vast networks of similar cracks can be found in the Earth's crust and are thought to have been abundant on Earth before life formed. The mixture was filtered along a temperature gradient, which enables the isolation and enrichment of specific molecules, owing to slight differences in their molecular structure.

The experimental results show that even a moderate temperature difference was sufficient to separate and purify several types of prebiotic molecules, including 2-aminozoles and amino acids, increasing their concentrations by a factor of ten and three orders of magnitude, respectively.

The concentration ratios could be improved further by increasing the size of the network of cracks and are shown to be successful across a variety of temperatures, solvents and pH values.

The experimental conditions were shown to facilitate the coupling of two glycine molecules, a starting point in peptide synthesis, aided by forming concentrations five times higher than the starting mixture.

The success of this method suggests that naturally occurring geothermal heat flows could have driven this separation in the early Earth and provided an efficient method for producing the compounds necessary to study the origins of life.

Influenza A H5N1 detected in dairy cows in 6 states in the U.S.

The exact extent of the spread of H5N1 in cows has not yet been ascertained since cattle are not routinely tested for avian influenza and the symptoms have been relatively mild

Bani Jolly
Vinod Scaria

Avian influenza (bird flu) is a highly contagious viral infection that primarily affects birds. An emerging new lineage 2.3.4.4b of avian influenza has been spreading across the globe since late 2020, carried by migratory birds following specific routes. This panzootic has a significant effect on the avian population with disastrous consequences to the ecology and significant economic loss affecting poultry across the world. In rare instances, the virus can infect mammals from birds causing spillovers, and in recent years, several such instances of spillovers spanning over 200 species have been noted, the most recent being polar bears in Antarctica. Close contact with infected animals could mean the virus could spill over infecting humans and this comes with a significantly large fatality rate.

In late March 2024, a multistate outbreak of H5N1 in dairy cows was detected in the U.S. In what started as a mystery disease affecting dairy herds in Texas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) detected the highly pathogenic strain of the virus in herds across the states of Texas and Kansas. The affected animals displayed symptoms including loss of appetite, low-grade fever, and reduced lactation. This marked the first time H5N1 had been detected in cattle, raising concerns about potential transmission routes and the broader impact on the dairy and meat industry. To date, H5N1 has been detected in over 12 herds from six states – Texas, Kansas, Michigan, New Mexico, Idaho and Ohio.

In Texas, other animals in proximity to the affected farms – wild birds and cats – also showed signs of illness and have tested positive for the virus. The exact extent of the spread of H5N1 in cows has not yet been ascertained since cattle are not routinely tested for avian influenza and the symptoms have been relatively mild, leaving possibilities that there may be other undetected infected herds. The initial detections in late March in Texas, Kansas, and Michigan have yet to show a definitive pattern of transmission. Given the pace of the spread of infection across herds, the transmission of the virus within cattle has not yet been ruled out. Investigations are ongoing to determine the exact source of the spread to cows.

H5N1 outbreak in dairy cows

The H5N1 outbreak in dairy cows began in late March 2024 in Texas

Symptoms: The affected animals displayed symptoms including loss of appetite, low-grade fever, and reduced lactation. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

- This is the first time that H5N1 has been detected in cattle. It raises concerns about potential transmission routes
- So far, H5N1 has been detected in over 12 herds from six states — Texas, Kansas, Michigan, New Mexico, Idaho and Ohio
- In Texas, wild birds and cats that were in proximity to the affected farms have tested positive for the virus
- Transmission of the virus within cattle has not yet been ruled out
- In April 2024, a human infection of H5N1 was reported from Texas
- In general, the risk of infections for humans remains low, but farm workers are at a higher risk of getting infected
- H5N1 infections in humans can range from mild symptoms to severe illness and even death
- So far, 800 sporadic human H5N1 cases have been reported from over 20 countries, with a case-fatality ratio of 53%

Genomic insights

In April 2024, a human infection of H5N1 was reported from Texas. The infected individual had contact with cows presumed to be infected with the virus. Fortunately, the patient had mild illness, with symptoms like eye redness, and has recovered after being treated with antivirals. Following this case, the CDC has reiterated that the risk of infections for humans remains low, although people with prolonged or close exposure to H5N1-infected animals such as farm workers, are at a higher risk. This is the second case of human H5N1 infection reported from the U.S. A previous case was reported in 2022 from Colorado. Human H5N1 infections are rare but have been sporadically reported in several countries.

H5N1 infections in humans can range from mild symptoms of eye infections to severe illness including pneumonia and death. Since 2003, more than 800 sporadic human H5N1 cases have been reported to the World Health Organization from over 20 countries, with a case-fatality ratio of 53%. In January 2024, concerns about H5N1 avian influenza rose in Southeast Asia when Cambodia reported two human cases, with tragically one resulting in death.

Researchers sequenced the H5N1 virus from both the infected Texas cows and the human case and found that both viruses belonged to clade 2.3.4.4b of H5N1, with the human strain having one minor mutation potentially linked to adaptation in mammals. However, this change has not led to increased transmissibility among humans, and the overall public health risk remains low according to the CDC. Since late 2021, H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b has circulated in wild birds in the U.S.

Globally, 2023 also saw potential spillover events with H5N1 linked to the deaths of seals in Russia and infections in marine mammals in Peru. Early in 2023, dead seals in Russia and infected marine mammals in Peru suggested H5N1 might jump from birds to mammals. Additionally, the U.K. reported deaths of other animals including otters and foxes due to H5N1. These incidents underscore the need for further research to understand how H5N1 might evolve and potentially adapt to different species.

In summary, while the current risk of H5N1 transmission to humans is considered low, a combined approach of disease surveillance and monitoring the virus's genetic makeup (genomic surveillance) will be crucial for managing the outbreak.

(Bani Jolly is a senior scientist at Karkinos Healthcare and Vinod Scaria is a senior consultant at Vishwanath Cancer Care Foundation)

Over-reliance on smear microscopy for TB detection

R. Prasad

The presumptive TB testing rate in the country increased from 1,352 per lakh population in 2022 to 1,710 per lakh population in 2023. However, even two years before the 2025 deadline that the government has set to "eliminate" TB in India, only 21% of presumptive TB testing in 2023 was upfront done using a rapid molecular diagnostic test.

According to the India TB Report 2024, which is yet to be made public, at 79%, the vast majority of presumptive TB testing was still carried out using the 100-year old sputum smear microscopy, which has low sensitivity. Ironically, compared with 2022, there has actually been a marginal decrease – from 23% to 21% – in the percentage of presumptive TB testing offered upfront using a molecular test in 2023.

The number of molecular testing facilities in the country has increased from 5,090 in 2022 to 6,496 in 2023. Also, there was a small increase in the rate of molecular testing in 2023 compared with 2022; the number of rapid molecular tests offered for presumptive TB testing increased from 292.7 per lakh population in 2022 to 358 per lakh population in 2023.

However, this has not been reflected in an increase in the proportion of molecular testing last year compared with 2022. India has still a long way to go before it reaches the goal of offering a molecular test upfront to all presumptive TB patients, with nil reliance on smear microscopy.

Grim choices: The proportion of molecular testing in 2023 has not increased compared with 2022.

In 2023, 37.19 lakh patients were offered a CBNAAT test, of which 7.4 lakh people were diagnosed with TB, representing a yield of 20%. In the case of TrueNat, of the 31.13 lakh patients who were tested using TrueNat, 3.3 lakh persons were diagnosed with TB, representing a yield of 11%. For smear microscopy, of the 1.89 crore persons tested, only 5.78 lakh were diagnosed with TB, representing a yield of just 3%.

Smear microscopy

The National Strategic Plan 2017-2025 wanted to reduce the number of presumptive TB patients who are offered sputum smear microscopy from over 9.1 million in 2015 to 5.1 million in 2023 while increasing the number of molecular tests from 40,000 in 2015 to over 14.7 million in 2023. However, as per the India TB report, in 2023, India was far from reaching the ambitious target set by NSP 2017-2025. The overreliance on smear microscopy has continued in 2023 with 79% of presumptive TB cases detected using smear microscopy and just 21% cases detected using a molecular test.

The revised National Strategic Plan 2020-2025 has raised the bar even higher for precision tests to be used for initial diagnosis.

Four years after the launch of the revised NSP, India is nowhere near meeting the targets. One of the main objectives of the revised NSP 2020-2025 is the early detection of presumptive TB cases.

It clearly says there should be "prompt diagnosis" using highly sensitive diagnostic tests for detecting presumptive TB cases "at the first point of contact" both in the private and public sectors.

Universal drug-susceptibility testing in all drug-sensitive TB cases is crucial for early identification of drug-resistant TB. The revised NSP 2020-2025 clearly states that NTEP should provide "universal access" to drug resistance testing.

However, in 2023, the proportion of notified TB patients offered drug-susceptibility testing was just 58% as against the target of 98%. In the absence of drug-susceptibility testing, it is not possible to ascertain drug-resistant cases and offer them suitable MDR-TB medicines.

SNAPSHOTS

Fiber coupled to the body enables textile electronics

A flexible electronic fiber that utilises the human body as part of the circuit enables textile-based electronics without the need for batteries or chips, a study report. According to the researchers, the approach is well-suited for scalable manufacture of comfortable fiber-based electronics for a wide range of applications, including "smart" clothing. The soft, thin fiber that enables wireless visual-digital interactions utilises the human body as part of the circuit. The approach harvests electromagnetic energy.

'Tightening of muscles could destroy epithelial cells'

In asthma, the tightening of muscles around the bronchi causes damage to the airway by squeezing and destroying epithelial cells, which promotes the airway inflammation and mucus production often associated with an asthma attack, researchers report. The findings suggest that preventing the mechanical damage rather than treating only its downstream symptoms, could pave the way for therapies that stop the asthma inflammatory cycle. More than 300 million people worldwide suffer from asthma.

Antibody therapy protects large animals from Nipah

Scientists have developed a potent antibody treatment that can protect large and small animals from infections with the Nipah virus, a deadly emerging pathogen with mortality rates as high as 40% to 90% in humans. The antibody treatment named huIF5 targets the prefusion form of the Nipah virus F protein. In hamsters, the researchers found that administering the antibody one day after infection led to a 100% survival rate. It protected macaques.

Question Corner

Landslide alert

Can large landslides be remotely detected in real-time?

Now it is possible to remotely detect large landslides within minutes of occurrence and to quickly determine whether they are close to open water and present a tsunami hazard. Researchers at the University of Alaska Fairbanks have devised a way to determine a landslide's location, volume and potential impact. This might support the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's goal of issuing a tsunami warning within five minutes of a landslide. A prototype system capable of real-time detection has been in place since August in the area of the Barry Arm of Prince William Sound, Alaska. It uses data from seismic stations already in the Alaska network. The method involves quickly identifying a landslide's long-period waves amid a seismic record busy with short-period waves created not only by a landslide but also by nearby earthquakes and glaciers and by human-caused activity.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

Will new solar power rules boost production?

What is the Approved Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic Modules Order?

Jacob Koshy

The story so far:

To incentivise India's solar module manufacturing industry, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has brought into effect from April 1 an executive order, The Approved Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic Modules (Requirements for Compulsory Registration) Order, 2019.

What is the context of the executive order?

This order was first issued by the MNRE in 2019 and requires makers of solar modules to voluntarily submit to an inspection of their manufacturing facilities by the National Institute of Solar Energy, a Ministry-affiliated body. Being on the list as an 'approved' manufacturing facility certifies a company as a legitimate manufacturer of solar panels and not a mere importer or assembler. This became necessary because India's solar industry, its claim of indigenousness notwithstanding, is heavily reliant on imports of cheaper and comparable-quality solar modules from China.

Modules are multiple solar panels joined together. Solar panels are an assembly of solar cells. Despite being among the top manufacturers in the world and a commitment to scale solar installation four-fold by 2030, local production of these cells and modules is much below demand. India also has limited capacity to make the raw material of a cell – ingots, wafers – and is dependent on imported cells.

> The creation of a domestic list of manufacturers is also aimed at restricting imports from China, which controls nearly 80% of the global supply of solar modules

Why is India reliant on imports?

The creation of such a list was also aimed at restricting imports from China, which controls nearly 80% of the global supply, with the downturn in diplomatic relations between the countries also being a factor. India has ambitious plans of sourcing about 500 GW, nearly half its requirement of electricity, from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. This would mean at least 280 GW from solar power by that year or at least 40 GW of solar capacity being annually added until 2030. In the last five years, this has barely crossed 13 GW though the government has claimed that COVID-19 affected this trajectory. The difficulty is that meeting the targets require many more solar panels and component cells than India's domestic industry can supply.

If the list is voluntary why pay to be on it?

The major advantage of being on the list is eligibility to compete for tenders issued by the government for its flagship solar energy programmes. This includes among others the recently announced PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. The scheme envisages subsidising rooftop solar installations for nearly one crore households in the country involving an estimated subsidy of ₹75,000 crore. However, only domestic manufacturers, certified as part of the Approved Models and Manufacturers (AMM) list, would be eligible. There is also another scheme called the PM KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyaan) that aims to provide solar pumpsets and rural electrification. For manufacturers to be eligible to provide components under this scheme, they have to be certified as genuine local manufacturers. The government also has a ₹24,000 crore scheme, called the Production Linked Incentive Scheme, that is targetted at incentivising domestic manufacture of solar panels and their components. Eligibility for this scheme too requires one to be a bona fide local manufacturer. So far, 14 major companies have become eligible for incentives to manufacture solar modules worth 48 GW. However, these restrictions apply only to fresh projects and plants and facilities commissioned before March 2024 can rely on imported modules.

Is India's manufacturing capacity adequate?

Last year was a fortunate year for Indians in the solar business. China which supplies over 80% of solar components globally saw a curb in orders from the U.S. on the grounds that the former relied on "forced labour" by Uiyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang province. Europe too scaled back imports from China and a beneficiary of this was India which exported nearly $1 billion worth of modules in six months of 2023-24. However, reports suggest that the U.S. might roll back duties on China and this could again mean uncertainty for the future of Indian exports. It is estimated that nearly half of India's solar modules are imported from China and the demand-supply mismatch is expected to persist. The government, however, has claimed that beginning this year, there will be a significant rise in manufacturing capacity. While the list of certified manufacturers on the AMM list has grown to 82 according to the MNRE, there is yet no list of such manufacturers of solar cells, implying that India is still far away from achieving a comfortable degree of self-reliance.

Why are Katchatheevu pacts being questioned?

What triggered the controversy? Who owns the island? How was the issue settled? What were India's gains? Will revisiting bilateral pacts solve the fishermen's issue? What has been the response in India, especially in Tamil Nadu? What about Sri Lanka?

Meera Srinivasan

The story so far:

On March 31, Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on social media platform 'X' that he blamed the Congress for "callously" giving away Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka. He cited a media report on documents received in response to a Right to Information Act application from K. Annamalai, the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Tamil Nadu president. Soon after, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held a media conference, in which he sought to elaborate on Mr. Modi's allegation. Calling for a "solution", he said the bilateral agreements signed by India and Sri Lanka in 1974 and 1976, when the Congress and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) were in power respectively at the Centre and in Tamil Nadu, displayed indifference about Katchatheevu island, and compromised Indian fishermen's rights in the Palk Strait separating India and Sri Lanka.

Where is Katchatheevu?

Katchatheevu is an uninhabited island spanning some 285 acres in the Palk Strait that separates Tamil Nadu and northern Sri Lanka. More precisely, it is located 14.5 km south of Delft Island and about 16 km to the northeast of Rameswaram. It is barren, has no drinking water or infrastructure, except a sole Catholic structure dedicated to St. Anthony.

What was the dispute?

The dispute was over who owns Katchatheevu. Negotiations began in 1921, between the British colonial governments of Madras and Ceylon, with both sides claiming territorial ownership.

> When India agreed that Katcha-theevu would be in Sri Lankan territory, New Delhi obtained sovereign rights over Wadge Bank and its rich marine resources

Controversy again: A view of Katchatheevu. BALACHANDAR. L

The matter was settled some five decades later, after the Governments of India and Sri Lanka, under Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Sirimavo Bandaranaike, signed two bilateral agreements in 1974 and 1976. The governments agreed that Katchatheevu falls within Sri Lanka's territory, and on a maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mannar and Bay of Bengal to define the two countries' exclusive economic zones. With the exclusive economic zones, India and Sri Lanka agreed to exercise sovereign rights over the living and non-living resources of their respective zone. The understanding was that fishing vessels and fishermen of India and Sri Lanka shall not fish in each other's waters, territorial sea and the exclusive zone.

However, despite the historic dispute over its territorial definition, fishermen from Tamil Nadu visit Katchatheevu every March, along with their Tamil-speaking counterparts of northern Sri Lanka, for the annual St. Anthony's festival. The Indian fishermen do not require a passport to visit the island in Sri Lankan territorial waters for this purpose, because the 1974 agreement expressly permitted them to access the island for rest, drying of nets, and the festival, while prohibiting any fishing activity.

What did India get?

Commentary and analysis from the time, including in *The Hindu*, shows New Delhi was seen as gaining some diplomatic mileage with its neighbour, which was tilting towards China then. A few years after the liberation of Bangladesh, and alongside the difficult question of citizenship for Indian-origin Tamils who were rendered stateless in Sri Lanka, New Delhi deemed strong and close ties with Sri Lanka important. Further, New Delhi got sovereign rights over Wadge Bank, located near Kanniyakumari, and its rich marine resources. Earlier this year, the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Directorate of Hydro-Carbon put out Notice Inviting Offers (NIO) for the exploration and development of oil and gas blocks in India, under the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP). The move drew flak from residents of Kanniyakumari and environmentalists who raised concerns over such activity impacting the marine ecosystem around Wadge Bank.

Are fishermen arrests related to the island?

No, they are not. Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu have been facing arrests by the Sri Lankan Navy for many years now, for fishing illegally in Sri Lanka's territorial waters. Invariably, the arrests are made well past Katchatheevu, very close to Sri Lanka's northern shores. Northern Sri Lankan fishermen, also Tamil speaking, have been agitating since the end of the island nation's civil war in 2009, to assert their fishing rights. The Indian fishing boats are a major impediment to their post-war recovery.

In particular, they resist the use of the bottom-trawling fishing method used by their Indian counterparts, where trawl nets go down to the seabed, and scoop out all marine organisms, including small fishes and eggs. Eager to boost its marine exports, India began encouraging mechanised trawler fishing decades ago, when the Norwegian government invested millions of dollars into modernising India's fishing fleet from the 1950s and up to the early 1970s. Owing to the practice, marine resources along Tamil Nadu's coast have depleted, pushing Indian fishermen towards the Sri Lankan coast, rich in marine biodiversity, especially shrimps. Northern Sri Lankan fishermen are opposing the use of the fishing method that Indian fishermen stubbornly hold on to, despite the two governments in 2016 agreeing to expedite the "transition towards ending the practice of bottom trawling at the earliest". The fishermen's conflict is a contest between Tamil-speaking fishermen in India and Sri Lanka, with those from Tamil Nadu habitually fishing illegally in Sri Lankan waters, using bottom trawlers that are banned in Sri Lanka. Although many politicians in India often conflate the two issues, Katchatheevu is not the site of this struggle, and its "retrieval" cannot be a solution to it.

What has been the response?

Opposition parties led by the Congress have slammed the remarks, citing the government's own position in 2015 that the previous agreements did not "involve either acquiring or ceding of territory belonging to India". Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin asked if PM Modi raised the issue of the retrieval of the Katchatheevu island with Sri Lanka once during his 10-year rule. Senior diplomats, who have led Indian missions in Sri Lanka, said questioning past agreements could damage India's credibility and impair relations with our neighbour. Former National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon told *The Hindu* that reopening the 50-year-old-agreement could prove to be a "self-goal."

In what some see as a muted response from the Sri Lankan government, the country's Foreign Minister Ali Sabry has said there is no need to resume talks on a matter resolved 50 years ago. Sri Lanka's Fisheries Minister Douglas Devananda has accused India of acting in self-interest "to ensure Sri Lankan fishermen do not have access" around Katchatheevu. Fishermen on both sides have voiced concern over the remarks, while reminding the two governments that much needs to be done to resolve the actual fisheries conflict that is threatening both the region's marine ecosystem and livelihoods of fisher folk who depend on it.

What is the outlook on women's employment?

What does the India Employment Report, 2024 state about key labour market indicators? Why is women's participation in the labour force low? What are the recommendations to bring about a change in women's job prospects?

Sudipta Datta

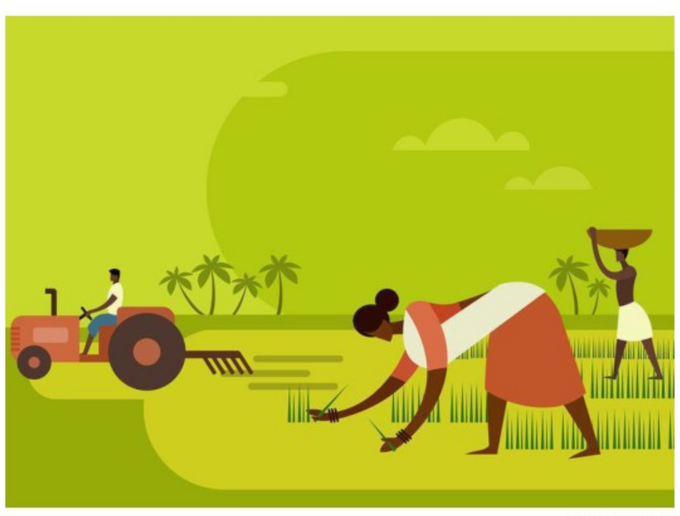
The story so far:

The authors of the India Employment Report, 2024, released recently by the Institute for Human Development and the International Labour Organization, point out that key labour market indicators have improved in recent years. The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), the Workforce Participation Rate (WPR) and the Unemployment Rate (UR) showed long-term deterioration between 2000 and 2019 but improved thereafter, the authors note, saying that the improvement coincides with periods of economic distress, both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the exception of two peak pandemic quarters.

What about women's participation?

The female LFPR is very low compared to the male counterparts; in 2023, the male LFPR was pegged at 78.5; and the women LFPR was 37. The world women LFPR rate is 49, according to the World Bank figures. The female LFPR had been steadily declining since 2000 and touched 24.5 in 2019, before inching up, particularly in rural areas. But the writers point out that notwithstanding the modest improvements, employment conditions remain poor.

> Nearly two-thirds of the employment after 2019 comprised self-employed workers, among whom unpaid (women) family workers predominate



GETTY IMAGES

Amit Basole, who teaches Economics at Azim Premji University, and heads the Centre for Sustainable Employment, explains that the increase in labour force participation has come mostly in rural areas and mostly in self-employment, which means largely unpaid work. "This suggests that it is distress resulting from the economic slowdown prior to COVID and then the pandemic itself that has contributed to women entering the labour force," he says.

Prof. Basole adds that there are some other hypotheses out there, such as improvements in measuring women's work in the Periodic Labour Force Survey and increased non-farm employment for men that has led to women substituting for men in agriculture. "But this is less likely. However, definitive evidence on the cause(s) is lacking," he notes.

Where are women employed?

The India Employment Report shows that it is women who largely account for the increase in self-employment and unpaid family work. Nearly two-thirds of the incremental employment after 2019 comprised self-employed workers, among whom unpaid (women) family workers predominate. The share of regular work, which steadily increased after 2000, started declining after 2018.

The rate of youth not in employment, education or training globally has been consistently the highest in South Asia, at an average of 29.2% between 2010 and 2019 (ILO 2022a). India also has a large share of youth not in employment, education or training, and the rate is higher among young women than men.

What are some of the reasons for low women's participation in the labour force?

Economists and women's rights experts point at various barriers women face in terms of a careers or a job. They list factors from a lack of jobs, women being made responsible for all care-giving duties at home plus cooking and cleaning to low wages, patriarchal mindsets and safety issues. In her 2022 book, *The Making of a Catastrophe: The Disastrous Economic Fallout of the COVID-19 Pandemic in India*, Jayati Ghosh, observing the sharp decline in women's labour participation between 2004 and 2018, writes that only some part of the phenomenon of women moving out of the labour market could be explained by greater involvement in education, especially for the age cohort 15 to 19. But with participation rates falling for women across all ages, "clearly, there was a process in operation, which has also been noted globally, of women being squeezed out of employment because of overall scarcity of paid work."

Prof. Basole feels there are both supply and demand side reasons for the decline in women's LFPR. On the labour demand side, in general, India's growth pattern has not been job intensive. This combined with social norms that restrict women's mobility and make them primary caregivers at home, means that women are not free to take up available opportunities. In addition, concerns over public safety and lack of transport also confine women to looking for work close to home, further limiting their options, a point Prof. Ghosh too makes.

The 2023 Economics Nobel Laureate Claudia Goldin's research showed that several factors have influenced the supply of and demand for female labour. "These include women's opportunities for combining paid work and a family, decisions relating to education and childrearing, technical innovations, laws and norms, and the structural transformation of the economy." In a paper about her research, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, pointed out that at the heart of Golden's analysis is the fact that women's choices have often been, and remain, limited by marriage and responsibility for the home and family. Her research may have been conducted in the U.S., going back 200 years, but her insights hold true in many other countries, including India as well.

What needs to change?

Economists say interventions are needed on both the demand and supply side of the labour market. On the demand side, says Prof. Basole, policies that promote labour intensive sectors (in both manufacturing and relatively higher productivity services) are needed. Public investment in safety and transport is also critical as is public investment in affordable child and elderly care. "All of these types of support can enable women to work outside the home and take advantage of relatively better paying opportunities," he adds.

The charity that Israel bombed in Gaza

World Central Kitchen

Israeli forces say 'misidentification at night' led to the bombing of an aid convoy belonging to the charity in which seven of its members were killed, but its founder Jose Andres says the IDF systematically targeted the aid workers, 'car by car'

Adithya Narayan

"I don't open restaurants, I tell stories," two-star Michelin chef Jose Andres said in an interview in January. Little could he have imagined back then of the sad chapter that would bookend the story three months later. On the night of April 2, seven workers of his non-profit aid group, World Central Kitchen, operating in Gaza, were killed in Israeli strikes.

Hamas's cross-border attacks of October 7 spawned a full-blown Israeli invasion of Gaza costing over 33,000 Palestinian lives, mostly women and children, and injuring more than 75,000. Along with air strikes and ground operations, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has imposed a choke-hold on the enclave.

Tel Aviv's measures to this end have included discrediting the UN Relief Works Agency, accusing it of harbouring extremists within its fold, and hampering the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Together, these actions have wrung the territory dry of food and water, with a famine looming in the enclave.

Stepping up to these challenges was the World Central Kitchen (WCK), which tried to minimise the fallout from Israeli actions by preparing 42 million meals through 68 community kitchens on the Strip. Before that, the group served 1.75 million hot meals to Israelis displaced by the Hamas attacks. This is, however, set to become a thing of the past as the WCK, along with ANERA and Project HOPE – two other groups carrying out aid work in the territory – has paused operations in the attack's aftermath.

Before the Israeli Defence Forces' attack, the WCK was engaged in a range of activities on the Strip. In the words of Mr. Andres, "We don't just feed people, we create systems"; a spirit best reflected by the makeshift jetty the charity built in the southwest of Gaza using building rubble. Expanding on this, the cooks' collective helped facilitate a maritime corridor to bring humanitarian aid from Cyprus to Gaza with funding from the UAE and in collaboration with the Spanish NGO Open Arms.

Last month's pilot project saw 200 tonnes of aid arrive at the jetty. Soon after, a second convoy of 332 tonnes set sail from Cyprus on March 30. WCK workers, who had overseen the offloading at the pier, had unloaded 100 tonnes of aid at a warehouse in Deir-al-Balah in central Gaza and were returning to Rafah in the south when their convoy was hit on April 2. That they were travelling on a route pre-approved by the Israeli Army, or in a band of three vehicles, of which two were armoured and had giant logos of the WCK emblazoned on top, had little bearing on the IDF which proceeded with the strike.

Mr. Andres, while appearing on a talk show in November, said he was proud that the individuals of his group who possessed the courage to move into a disaster zone when others stepped away from it; just that this time around, they were forced to pay the price for that courage.

'Grave mistake'

In the wake of the strike, the ship with the remaining 220 tonnes of food returned to Cyprus while the IDF held an inquiry. Headed by a former General of the Israeli Army, the inquiry announced the findings on April 5, leading to the dismissal of two officers. Mr. Netanyahu, while calling the attack 'tragic', callously remarked, "These incidents happen during wartime." However, the Israeli Army put out a rare admission in which it acknowledged that the strike was a 'grave mistake' and said 'misidentification at night' had led to the error in judgment.

But this is not the first time aid delivery has come under attack in Gaza. On February 29, Israeli forces fired at an aid distribution point in northern Gaza causing a stampede and killing 115 Palestinians. Similar incidents, though smaller in magnitude, were reported through March. Also prevalent is the targeting of police officials guarding aid distribution works, who the IDF says nurture militants within their ranks.

Given that the victims of the latest strike involved six foreigners – three Britons, an Australian, a Polish national, and a dual citizen of the U.S.

PHOTO CREDIT: AP

and Canada – along with a Palestinian driver, the attack triggered sharp responses from world powers, who until now had largely turned a blind eye towards the plight of aid workers in Gaza. U.S. President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk are among the leaders who have criticised Israel now.

For Mr. Andres, who called out the IDF for systematically targeting his team "car by car", the incident marks an about-turn in his stand towards the conflict. What began in the form of support for Israel's right to defend itself in the wake of the Hamas attack – so much so that the 54-year-old chef even criticised a Spanish Minister for accusing the Jewish nation of committing war crimes in Gaza – has given way to the condemnation of the Netanyahu government's 'indiscriminate killing'.

He also said Israel should stop using food as a weapon – a sentiment echoed by the International Court of Justice when it asked Israel to ensure an unfettered flow of food aid into the enclave.

This is not the WCK's first brush with casualties. According to the BBC, the charity lost seven volunteers in Ukraine, which was the first active conflict zone it served in. Until then, it specialised in preparing and distributing food in disaster zones.

Mr. Andres was vacationing in the Cayman Islands when he learned about the Haiti earthquake in 2010 which killed more than 2,00,000 people. It was then that the idea for a collective struck him; one that inspires cooks and chefs to join the ranks of first responders, one that puts them on the front line and teaches them to adapt to situations.

The WCK is a non-profit that functions with a "private sector mentality", says its former CEO Nate Mook in the Ron Howard-directed documentary *We Feed People*. The NGO cooks by procuring food locally and employing local infrastructure.

Global operations

After its Haiti stint, the WCK helped people during earthquakes in Turkey, Morocco and Japan, Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, and the wildfires in Chile. Riding on the goodwill garnered through these activities, the charity functions on donations. In 2022, it raked in $518 million and Mr. Andres received $100 million from Amazon founder Jeff Bezos in 2021.

The group has not been without its share of controversies. The charity acknowledged reports of fraud in 2023 and said it was looking into its activities in Ukraine, where it said it was spending some $2 million per day. Media reports had also blamed Mr. Andres for asking volunteers to go to places in Turkey that were deemed too dangerous after earthquakes.

Yet, Mr. Andres and his U.S.-based charity were nominated for the Nobel Prize by Democrats. He became a naturalised U.S. citizen during Barack Obama's presidency and is currently a co-chair of President Biden's Council on Sports, Fitness and Nutrition.

Mr. Andres, who wears his immigrant badge with pride, also had a run-in with former President Donald Trump, pulling out of a restaurant project at the Trump International Hotel in Washington, when he derided Mexican migrants.

Speaking about the WCK's future in Gaza after the strike, Mr. Andres had said "everything has its time" – something that is quickly running out for the people of Gaza.

THE GIST

- Jose Andres founded WCK in 2010 in the wake of the Haiti earthquake in which more than 2,00,000 people were killed
- After its Haiti stint, the WCK helped people during earthquakes in Turkey, Morocco and Japan, Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, and the wildfires in Chile.
- Riding on the goodwill garnered through these activities, the charity functions on donations: in 2022, it raked in $518 million and Andres received $100 million from Amazon founder Jeff Bezos in 2021

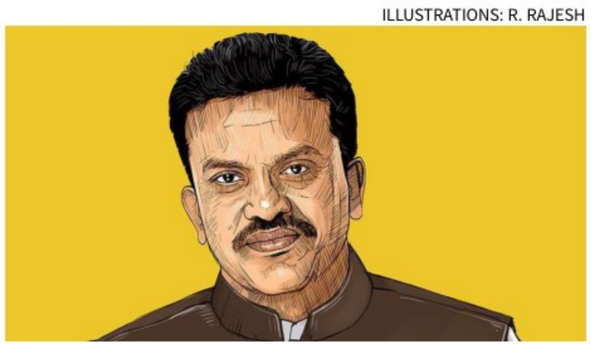
End of an innings

Sanjay Nirupam

The Sena leader-turned-Congressman, who was sacked from the party, says Nehruvian socialism has lost its importance in today's India

Shoumojit Banerjee

ILLUSTRATIONS: R. RAJESH



For a journalist whose dawn in politics began with the blessings of late Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray and reached its zenith in the Congress, Sanjay Nirupam, who was recently expelled from the Congress, has lost none of his acerbity honed during his first vocation.

Ostracised for "anti-party activities", Mr. Nirupam relentlessly warned of the dangers in letting his party's ally, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), dominate the Congress in Mumbai and Maharashtra.

Lashing out at the Congress's leadership, Mr. Nirupam observed that just like the Bolsheviks, who had become ideologically bankrupt after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Congress's Nehruvian socialism ceased to be of import today.

Hailing from Rohtas in the eastern Indian State of Bihar, Mr. Nirupam began his career as a journalist in 1986, and moved to Mumbai in 1988 where he worked with *Jansatta*, the sister publication of the *Indian Express*.

An ardent film buff and admirer of iconic Bollywood star Dev Anand, Mr. Nirupam even penned the story for Anand's *Return of Jewel Thief* (1996) – the failed sequel to classic *Jewel Thief* (1967). It was at this point he became friends with Sanjay Raut – now a Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson – who was then cutting his teeth at *Loksatta*.

After Mr. Raut moved on to *Saamana* (the Shiv Sena's mouthpiece), he put a call to his friend Mr. Nirupam, intimating him of the party's need for a journalist to head its Hindi mouthpiece – *Dopahar ka Saamana*. The Hindi edition was Bal Thackeray's brainchild aimed at reaching out to Mumbai's Hindi-speaking populace in the aftermath of the 1992 Bombay riots. In a twist of fate, as their respective political careers progressed, Mr. Raut would later become Mr. Nirupam's bitter foe.

Mr. Nirupam joined *Dopahar ka Saamana* as its executive editor in 1993. His career subsequently saw a meteoric rise, with the Shiv Sena supremo sending the scribe as an MP to the Rajya Sabha in 1996. Importantly, Mr. Nirupam became the face of the Sena's endeavour to reach out to Mumbai's thriving North Indian voters, after the party shifted from its nativist stance of the late 1960s to a hardline 'Hindutva' position.

Slide in fortunes

Mr. Nirupam's Sena sojourn came to a crashing end after he was asked to step down as Rajya Sabha MP in 2005, a full-year before his term expired. He quit the Sena and joined the Congress in April 2005, being soon appointed as a general secretary of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee. He won the Mumbai North Lok Sabha seat in 2009, defeating the BJP's Ram Naik by a little over 6,000 votes.

The Congressman's political fortunes, however, saw a sharp slide with the BJP's re-emergence at the Centre under Narendra Modi in 2014.

This period was marked by a general decline in the Congress's fortunes in Maharashtra and Mumbai. The frenetic political manoeuvring between parties after the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly election resulted in the formation of the tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government headed by Uddhav Thackeray.

A firm opponent of an alliance with Mr. Thackeray's Sena right from the start, Mr. Nirupam embarrassed the party's ally further when he sought an investigation into the Thackeray family's newly-built residential property in Mumbai's Bandra.

The resentment against the Sena (UBT) reached a crescendo during pre-poll seat-sharing parleys when Mr. Nirupam strongly objected to Sanjay Raut's assertion that the Sena (UBT) would contest the same number of seats (23 of a total 48) that it had done in 2019 (when the Sena was not split and in alliance with the BJP).

While Mr. Nirupam protested against the Sena (UBT)'s "excessive demands", he was even more appalled at the Congress's seeming inability to contain its MVA ally.

Never the one to mince his words, Mr. Nirupam delivered a Parthian shot before his exit, pre-empting the Congress high command by submitting his resignation letter even before his official sacking, urging them to save stationery instead!

From prison to presidency

Bassirou Diomaye Faye

Senegal's youngest President has his task cut out as the country is battling extreme poverty and high unemployment in a region that is plagued by conflict and unrest

Priyali Prakash

Democracy is not really one of the ethos of West Africa's troubled Sahel region, but Senegal's 2024 presidential election offers a glimmer of hope in a land marred by conflict and unrest.

At 44, Bassirou Diomaye Faye was elected Senegal's new President – the youngest ever to hold the post – on March 25, barely two weeks after he was released from prison. He beat former Prime Minister and frontrunner Amadou Ba. Mr. Ba was supported by outgoing President Macky Sall, who attempted to postpone the election a few times, leading to mass protests.

Mr. Faye was born in Ndiaganiao, and completed his college education in M'bour, a coastal city in Senegal. A lawyer by degree from Dakar's Cheikh Anta Diop University, he excelled at his public administration exams and trained at the National School of Administration to be an inspector of taxes and estates.

He met Ousmane Sonko, leader of the Pastef Party, while working as a tax inspector. Pastef was created in 2014, and Mr. Faye started attending bureau meetings before he officially joined the party. His closeness to Mr. Sonko helped, and the party valued not only his ideas but also his loyalty to decisions of the larger group.

Mr. Faye's journey from prison to the presidency of Senegal is not an ordinary story. He was imprisoned in early 2023 on charges of contempt of court and defaming magistrates. Pastef Party leader Mr. Sonko was also arrested a few months later and was denied permission to contest in the presidential election. Mr. Faye, on the other hand, was not barred and decided to continue to take his party's aspirations forward. Initially selected as a proxy for Mr. Sonko, Mr. Faye's popularity among the Senegalese was visible in his short but lively campaign before the elections.

While the Pastef Party was dissolved in 2023, the Diomaye President Coalition received the support of more than 118 parties and movements for the 2024 presidential election.

Backed by Mr. Sonko and his loyal supporters, the Opposition coalition saw the tide turning in its favour after the early count of votes on March 25. By the evening, Senegalese people took to the streets to celebrate Mr. Faye's victory. Mr. Faye was sworn in on April 2, and he appointed Mr. Sonko as Prime Minister.

Mr. Faye's election promises focused on Senegal's youth many of whom take the route of illegal immigration to escape the country's endemic poverty. In a recent such incident, at least two dozen people died off Senegal's northern coast and many were injured after their Europe-bound boat capsized in February.

His manifesto touched upon better governance of Senegal's natural resources. Senegal is rich in oil and gas, and large companies, like BP, have attempted to commercialise fields off the West African shore with little success trickling to locals. Mr. Faye has promised economic sovereignty for the people of Senegal by promoting national private companies as well as opening the economy to multinational corporations. The newly elected President also assured better rule of law in the country, which includes preventing intimidation of opponents and journalists and avoiding arbitrary imprisonment.

A new era

Senegal currently faces widespread youth unemployment, and Mr. Faye promises to deliver on this front. According to Afrobarometer data published in October 2023, three in 10 Senegalese youth are unemployed.

Mr. Faye had also promised to roll back the French-inspired West African CFA Franc currency, but later dropped the plan to instead focus on reforming the West African Monetary Union.

The International Monetary Fund has predicted an acceleration in Senegal's GDP growth due to start of large hydrocarbon projects, which coincides with the first year of Mr. Faye's term. Experts are also cautious of how much influence will Mr. Sonko yield over Mr. Faye. Reuters notes Mr. Sonko to be more of an anti-establishment leader, while Mr. Faye is believed to be more austere.

DAMASCUS

Seven children killed, two persons injured in blast in southern Syria

AFP

Seven children were killed in southern Syria's Daraa province on Saturday when an "explosive device" detonated. "Seven children" were killed "and two other persons were injured, one of them a woman, when an explosive device planted by terrorists" went off in the city of Sanamayn, state news agency SANA reported. AFP

BRATISLAVA

Slovaks vote for new President against backdrop of Ukraine war

AP

Slovaks on Saturday voted for a new President in a tight race between a government ally and a critic who are at odds over the war in Ukraine. A potential shift towards Russia was at stake for the country in the run-off between pro-West diplomat Ivan Korcok and Ukraine-sceptic parliament Speaker Peter Pellegrini. AFP

DAKAR

Senegal's youngest President names 'breakaway' government

AFP

Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye named a "breakaway" government, appointing a host of fresh faces following his landslide election win last month. Mr. Faye looks set to share responsibilities with his appointed Prime Minister and former mentor Ousmane Sonko. Mr. Sonko unveiled on Friday a Cabinet of 25 Ministers. AFP

KYIV

Russian missile strikes in Ukraine kill eight persons and wound 12

AFP

Russian missile strikes in Ukraine overnight and on Saturday killed eight persons and wounded 12 more in the Kharkiv region, officials said. Overall, Russia fired 32 Iranian-made Shahed drones and six missiles at Ukraine overnight while Ukrainian air defence forces shot down three cruise missiles and 28 drones. AP

Enemy will regret Guards' killings in Syria, says Iran

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran on Saturday again threatened retaliation for the deaths of seven Revolutionary Guards in a strike on the country's embassy in Damascus, with the Army chief saying his country's enemies will "regret" the killings.

Tehran has vowed to avenge Monday's air strike on the Syrian capital it blamed on its arch-enemy Israel, which has not commented.

Iran's response "will be carried out at the right time, with the necessary precision and planning, and with maximum damage to the enemy so that they regret their action," chief of staff Mohammad Bagheri said on Saturday.

Israeli troops dig up body of hostage who died in Gaza

Hamas announces participation in new round of truce talks scheduled to be held in Cairo; Israel yet to take a call as it believes the event would be 'more political theatre than actual progress'

Reuters
JERUSALEM

Israel said on Saturday its special forces had recovered the body of a hostage killed while being held captive in Gaza, as the Palestinian enclave's dominant Islamist movement Hamas said it would take part in a new round of ceasefire talks in Cairo.

The body of Elad Katzir, a 47-year-old Israeli farmer, was unearthed by commandos in southern Khan Younis overnight, the military said. He had been killed by his Palestinian Islamic Jihad captors and buried there in mid-January, it said, citing intelligence information about which it declined to elaborate.

Shattered dreams: A woman sits holding empty containers outside a tent pitched by a destroyed building in Rafah. AFP

Islamic Jihad, an ally of Hamas, had no immediate comment.

Katzir was among 253 people dragged into Gaza by Hamas-led gunmen who killed some 1,200 others in southern Israel, according to official tallies, sparking an offensive that medics in the enclave say has killed more than 33,000 Palestinians.

Angered by an Israeli air strike that killed aid workers in Gaza, U.S. President Joe Biden on Thursday called for an "immediate ceasefire".

Hamas said it would send a delegation to Cairo on Sunday for a new round of mediated talks. Israel was undecided on whether to attend, an Israeli official said, citing concern that the event would be "more political theatre than actual progress".

Hamas wants any deal to bring about an end to the war and withdrawal of Israeli forces. Israel has said that, after any truce, it would topple Hamas, which is sworn to its destruction.

Russia evacuates more than 4,000 people as dam bursts

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

Russia on Saturday said it had evacuated 4,000 people in the Orenburg region, in the southern Urals near Kazakhstan, due to flooding after a dam burst.

Emergency services had been working through the night after a dam burst in the city of Orsk, near the border with Kazakhstan.

The press service of the Orenburg Governor said "4,208 people, including 1,019 children" had been evacuated and more than 2,500 homes were affected by the flooding after a dam burst on Friday following torrential rain.

Russia opened a criminal case for "negligence and violation of construction safety rules" over the burst dam, which was built in 2014.

More than 2,500 homes in the Orenburg region were affected by the flooding after a dam burst on Friday following torrential rain. AP

Orenburg regional Governor Denis Pasler said specialists assessed that the dam was built "for a different weight" and that the level of rainfall was "exceptional".

Authorities warned of a dangerous water level on the Ural river in the main city of Orenburg.

The Mayor of the city of half a million people, Sergei Salmin, said authorities would forcibly evacuate people from flooded zones if they refused orders to leave. He said the water level of the Ural river had risen to 855 cm and "will rise" further.

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said the floods were one of the worst natural disasters in Kazakhstan in 80 years.

Chinese don't want to follow security rules, says Maryam Nawaz

Press Trust of India
LAHORE

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Friday said that Chinese nationals living in Pakistan get "resentful" when they are asked to follow security protocols, a week after five Chinese engineers were among six killed in a suicide bombing in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Ms. Maryam was addressing her maiden Apex Committee meeting here and said "the Chinese living here do not want to follow security discipline". "They are resentful when they are asked to follow security protocols. They don't want to come under any discipline as they fret over it," she added.

Ms. Maryam, however, expressed her government's resolve to provide fool-proof security to the Chinese nationals working on development projects in Punjab. The meeting also condemned the killing of Chinese engineers in Bisham.

China may use AI-generated content for its benefit as India, U.S. go to the polls: Microsoft

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

With major economies like India and the U.S. going to the polls this year, China is likely to use AI-generated content to benefit its interests, U.S. software major Microsoft has alleged in a blog.

The blog is based on Microsoft Threat Intelligence insights in the latest East Asia report "Same targets, new playbooks: East Asia threat actors employ unique methods".

"With major elections taking place around the world this year, particularly in India, South Korea and the United States, we assess that China will, at a minimum, create and amplify AI-generated content to benefit its interests," the blog said.

Concerted attack: The report also mentions North Korean cyber threat actors working towards targeting elections. REUTERS

The report even mentions North Korean cyber threat actors also working towards targeting elections in these three countries.

According to Microsoft findings, the chances of the AI-generated content by China affecting election results will remain low but continued experimentation, augmenting memes etc may prove effective down the line.

Myanmar unrest

Microsoft's threat intelligence report shared screenshots of AI-generated videos in Mandarin and English which alleged that the U.S. and India were responsible for unrest in Myanmar.

Mexico breaks ties with Ecuador after police storm embassy

Associated Press
QUITO

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has quickly moved to break off diplomatic ties with Ecuador after the police broke into the Mexican Embassy to arrest a former Vice-President who had sought political asylum there after being indicted on corruption charges.

In an extraordinarily unusual move, the Ecuadorian police forced their way into the embassy in the capital, Quito, to arrest Jorge Glas, who had been residing there since December. The police broke through the external doors of the Mexican diplomatic headquarters in the Ecuadorian capital and entered the main patio to get Mr. Glas.

The raid prompted Mr. López Obrador to announce the break of diplomatic relations with Ecuador on Friday evening.

Mr. Glas has been convicted on bribery and corruption charges.

Sport

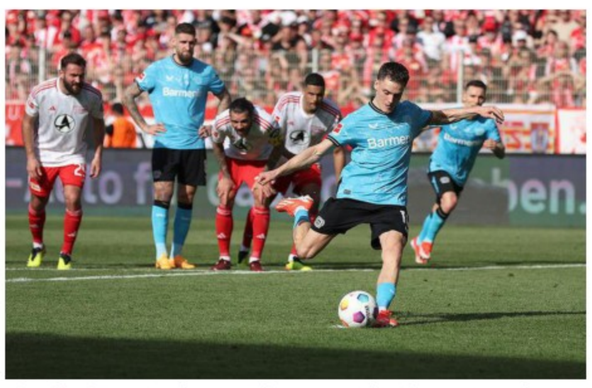
Leverkusen one win shy of Bundesliga title; Arsenal and City in cruise control

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
BERLIN

Bayer Leverkusen is just three points from a first Bundesliga title after a 1-0 win at Union Berlin on Saturday, with Bayern Munich letting a 2-0 lead slip to lose 3-2 at Heidenheim. Bayern was cruising with a two-goal lead at half-time thanks to strikes from Harry Kane and Serge Gnabry but conceded three times in the second half, losing its second match in a row.

Florian Wirtz converted a penalty in Leverkusen's hard-fought win, meaning Xabi Alonso's side needs just three points from its remaining six matches to clinch a first league title in the club's history.



The clincher: Wirtz fires Leverkusen to within three points of a well-deserved crown. GETTY IMAGES

Arsenal moved to the top of the Premier League as goals from Bukayo Saka, Kai Havertz and Leandro Trossard added the gloss to another mature performance from the Gunners to beat Brighton 3-0 on Saturday.

Kevin De Bruyne brought up his century of goals for Manchester City by scoring twice in a 4-2 win at Crystal Palace that moved the champion level on points with Liverpool.

The results: Premier League: Crystal Palace 2 (Mateta 3, Edouard 86) lost to Manchester City 4 (De Bruyne 13, 70, Lewis 47, Haaland 66); Brighton 0 lost to Arsenal 3 (Saka 33-pen, Havertz 62, Trossard 86); Aston Villa 3 (Watkins 39, 80, Rogers 46) drew with Brentford 3 (Jorgensen 59, Mbeumo 61, Wissa 68); Everton 1 (Calvert-Lewin 45+2) bt Burnley 0; Fulham 0 lost to Newcastle United 1 (Guimaraes 81); Luton 2 (Clark 73, Morris 90) bt Bournemouth 1 (Tavernier 52); Wolves 1 (Sarabia 33-pen) lost to West Ham United 2 (Paqueta 72-pen, Ward-Prowse 84).

Bundesliga: Union Berlin 0 lost to Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Wirtz 45+8-pen); Freiburg 1 (Grifo 59) lost to RB Leipzig 4 (Haidara 2, Openda 18, 44, Sesko 54)Heidenheim 3 (Sessa 50, Kleindienst 51, 79) bt Bayern Munich 2 (Kane 38, Gnabry 45).

Serie A: AC Milan 3 (Pulisic 6, Giroud 20, Leao 57) bt Lecce 0.

Petratos does it for Mohun Bagan against Punjab; NEUFC beats Blasters

ISL-10

Sports Bureau

Mohun Bagan Super Giant defeated Punjab FC 1-0 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi on Saturday as the Mariners kept afloat their hopes of clinching the League Winners Shield of the Indian Super League.

A strike by Dimitrios Petratos in the 42nd minute, which made him the outright highest goal-scorer for the Mariners in the ISL history, ensured that Antonio Habas' side suffered no more hiccups in catching up to the top-placed Mumbai City FC.

PFC has crashed out of the race to qualify for the playoffs. The Kolkata-based team now has 42 points in 20 games, two behind the Islanders (44), and hence the Mariners have all to play for especially considering that the two teams clash on the final day of the league stages on April 15 at the Salt Lake Stadium.

Main man: Petratos, left, found the net in the 42nd minute. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Hovering around

Petratos had been hovering around the Punjab box tirelessly, as he seemed in a mood to produce another one of his breath-taking shots from outside of the box.

That bore fruits, with a sweet effort from the left side by the striker getting slotted in right into the centre of the net.

The results:

At New Delhi: Punjab FC 0 lost to Mohun Bagan Super Giant 1 (Petratos 42).

At Guwahati: NorthEast United FC 2 (Albiach 24, Jithin 90+1) bt Kerala Blasters FC 0.

THE KING

Kohli becomes first batter to complete 7500 runs in IPL history

R.V. MOORTHY

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli became the first-ever batter in Indian Premier League history to reach the milestone of 7500 runs. Kohli achieved this feat during his unbeaten 72-ball 113 against Rajasthan Royals on Saturday. He has to his credit 7579 runs from 242 matches at a strike rate of 130.63.

RUB OF THE PINK

Got a bit lucky with the last six, says Royals' Buttler

R.V. MOORTHY

Rajasthan Royals' Jos Buttler, who got to his century with a six against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, said he got a bit lucky with the final shot. "Had a little bit of luck, did not time it well, just got over the rope, delighted with the win," Buttler said of his hit over the deep mid-wicket fence.

UNFORTUNATE

SRH leg-spinner Hasaranga ruled out of IPL 2024

AFP

Sunrisers Hyderabad leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga has been ruled out of the ongoing Indian Premier League 2024 due to chronic heel pain in his left foot, as per *ESPNcricinfo*. Hasaranga had not joined the Sunrisers squad and Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) informed BCCI of his unavailability for the season.

ONE STEP AT A TIME

Pushing Mayank to play Tests right now is not wise, says Watson

SANDEEP SAXENA

Shane Watson opines that Mayank Yadav should not be pushed to play Tests so early in his career. "Pushing him to play Tests is not wise at all. It is a waste of Indian cricket trying to push him into four-day and Test cricket, knowing the incredible value that he can provide in T20 and one-day cricket," Watson said on *JioCinema*.

Royals on a roll as Buttler's hundred trumps Kohli's

The Englishman scores his sixth century in the tournament after the India star comes up with his eighth; Samson plays a good hand for the Rajasthan side; RCB suffers fourth loss in five games

IPL-17

P.K. Ajith Kumar
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Royals increasingly looks the team to beat. But, the thing is nobody has found a way to do it yet.

Sanju Samson's men defeated Royal Challengers Bengaluru by six wickets with five balls to spare at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Saturday night. Riding on Virat Kohli's eighth IPL hundred, RCB had made 183 for three.

Game No. 100

The Indian master's century was nullified by a magnificent one from Jos Buttler (100 n.o., 58b, 9x4, 4x6), in his hundredth IPL game.

He had needed six to reach his sixth IPL century while his team required only one.

Buttler pulled Cameron Green to clear the boundary. His wild celebration meant how much it meant to him after going through a terrible patch.

Four on four

It was the Royals' fourth win in as many matches. They are now leading the table.

It was Buttler's 148-run partnership for the second with Samson (69, 42b, 8x4, 2x6) that made the chase look easy. The Royals team management must be relieved with the England superstar's knock.

With the law of averages seems to be catching up with his opening partner Yashasvi Jaiswal, Royals had been somewhat short of runs at the top of the order, but Riyan Parag's great run meant the team didn't have to suffer.

Contrasting fortunes: It was vintage Kohli, but Buttler's magnificent century turned out to be in a winning cause for Royals. R.V. MOORTHY

After Jaiswal was dismissed off the second ball of the innings – his leading edge off Reece Topley ballooned to Glenn Maxwell at mid-off – Buttler and Samson virtually took the game away from RCB.

The RCB innings had once again been more about Kohli (113 n.o., 72b, 12x4, 4x6). On this night, he got support from captain Faf du Plessis (44, 33b, 2x4, 2x6), who may not have looked at his best, as they put on 125 for the first wicket.

Kohli had indicated he was in nice touch from early on, with a wristy flick to square-leg for four against Nandre Burger and then a gorgeous swivelled-pull for a maximum against the same bowler in the following over.

But, his innings was destined to be overshadowed by Buttler's.

SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS

Virat Kohli (not out) 113 *(72b, 12x4, 4x6)*, Faf du Plessis c Buttler b Chahal 44 *(33b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Glenn Maxwell b Burger 1 *(3b)*, Saurav Chauhan c Jaiswal b Chahal 9 *(6b, 1x6)*, Cameron Green (not out) 5 *(6b)*; Extras (lb-2, w-9): 11. Total (for three wkts. in 20 overs): 183.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-125 (du Plessis, 13.6 overs), 2-128 (Maxwell, 14.5), 3-155 (Saurav, 17.2).

ROYALS BOWLING

Boult 3-0-30-0, Burger 4-0-33-1, Ashwin 4-0-28-0, Avesh 4-0-46-0, Chahal 4-0-34-2, Parag 1-0-10-0.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Yashasvi Jaiswal c Maxwell b Topley 0 (2b), Jos Buttler (not out) 100 *(58b, 9x4, 4x6)*, Sanju Samson c Dayal b Siraj 69 *(42b, 8x4, 2x6)*, Riyan Parag c Kohli b Dayal 4 *(4b, 1x4)*, Dhruv Jurel c Karthik b Topley 2 *(3b)*, Shimron Hetmyer (not out) 11 *(6b, 2x4)*; Extras (w-3): 3; Total (for four wkts. in 19.1 overs): 189.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-0 (Jaiswal, 0.2), 2-148 (Samson, 14.4), 3-155 (Parag, 15.4), 4-164 (Jurel, 16.3).

RCB BOWLING

Topley 4-0-27-2, Dayal 4-0-37-1, Siraj 4-0-35-1, Dagar 2-0-34-0, Green 3.1-0-27-0, Himanshu (Impact Player in place of Saurav) 2-0-29-0.

Toss: Royals. **PoM:** Buttler.
RR won by six wickets with five balls to spare.

Next assignment

RR: April 10 vs **GT**
Jaipur, 7.30 p.m.

RCB: April 11 vs **MI**
Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

MI will expect Suryakumar to ignite its campaign

In good spirits: Pant will eye an inspired performance from his men after a heavy loss against KKR. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

It is no stranger to poor starts. But the Indian Premier League's 17th edition has been stranger than ever before Mumbai Indians. Amidst all the uproar over the change in captaincy, it will be banking on Suryakumar Yadav to mark his arrival in style against Delhi Capitals on Sunday and give MI the much-needed fillip.

Suryakumar has been out of action for almost four months, having recovered from an ankle injury and sports hernia surgery. The 360-degree batter rested from Saturday's optional training session but sweetly timed the ball to all the corners of the Wankhede Stadium during his prolonged stint on Friday afternoon.

MI management - facing flak for its alleged mishandling of captaincy transition from Rohit Sharma to Hardik Pandya - will be hoping for Suryakumar to ignite its campaign after the team's three consecutive losses. MI will know time is running out for staying in contention for a place in the playoffs. Ditto is the case with Rishabh Pant's Delhi Capitals, which is placed second-from-bottom - one place ahead of MI - in the points table.

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	4	4	0	8	1.120
Kolkata Knight Riders	3	3	0	6	2.518
Chennai Super Kings	4	2	2	4	0.517
Lucknow Super Giants	3	2	1	4	0.483
Sunrisers Hyderabad	4	2	2	4	0.409
Punjab Kings	4	2	2	4	-0.220
Gujarat Titans	4	2	2	4	-0.580
Royal Challengers	5	1	4	2	-0.843
Delhi Capitals	4	1	3	2	-1.347
Mumbai Indians	3	0	3	0	-1.423

Injury concerns

While MI camp has a reason to rejoice in Suryakumar's availability, the Capitals are dealing with injury concerns to its three main bowlers.

Kuldeep Yadav is unlikely to be available due to a groin injury, while Mukesh Kumar underwent a prolonged fitness test after missing the last game. To add to its woes, all-rounder Mitchell Marsh will be unavailable for Sunday's game after hurting himself in DC's last outing.

Will Pant revive Capitals' campaign after being blown away by KKR? Or will Suryakumar turn the heat on? Over to Sunday afternoon!

Ganguly impressed with Pant's form, backs Hardik as MI captain

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Sourav Ganguly, the former India captain and BCCI chief, has stressed that Rishabh Pant is making a case to be picked for the T20 World Cup. Ganguly, the Delhi Capitals' Director of Cricket, also backed Hardik Pandya amidst the Mumbai Indians captaincy row.

"I will let a few more matches go. He is doing very well, as you all must have seen, keeping, batting, so he has held up well," Ganguly said at the Wankhede Stadium while addressing the pre-match media interaction ahead of Sunday's Indian Premier League tie.

"His form is fantastic, especially the way he has batted in the last two games.

"So let another week go, and I will be able to answer, provided the selectors want to pick him - that is most important. He is fully fit." Making a comeback to competitive cricket after nearly 15 months after being involved in a car accident, Pant has tallied 152 runs in four innings, at a strike rate of 158+.

While the Capitals' captain is in the headlines for the right reasons, his Mumbai Indians counterpart Hardik has been booed in all of MI's three losses so far.

"I don't think they should boo Hardik Pandya. The franchisee has appointed him as captain. That's what happens in sport, whether you captain India or whether you captain your state or whether you captain your franchise, you are appointed as captain," Ganguly said.

"Rohit Sharma is different class, his performance for his franchise and for India has been at a different level whether as captain or player.

"It is not Hardik's fault he has been appointed captain."

In a different league: Ganguly feels it is unfair on Hardik to be compared to Rohit so early in his captaincy stint. EMMANUAL YOGINI

All eyes on X-factor Mayank as Super Giants host Titans

M.R. Praveen Chandran
LUCKNOW

In a format which is unforgiving to the bowlers, a young tearaway has become the scourge of the batters in IPL this season.

The 21-year-old Delhi born Mayank Yadav, who demolished Punjab Kings and Royal Challengers Bengaluru with his thunderbolts in the last two matches, has evoked apprehension and fear in the mind of opposition batters.

There is no doubt that Mayank will once again be cynosure of all eyes when Lucknow Super Giants takes on Gujarat Titans, at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium here on Sunday.

It is hard to ignore the Mayank factor on the relaid faster surface at the Ekana cricket stadium which is a world apart from the low bounce, slow track where Super Giants had mixed luck last season.

Riding on Mayank's X-factor, the Super Giants will be looking to build a formidable record at home this season. With the LSG's fast bowling coach Morne Morkel hinting at retaining the winning combination, the Super Giants after a few days rest will look to continue the good run against Titans whose morale took a beating after suffering a stunning defeat to Punjab Kings earlier this week.

Not worried

The Titans was waylaid by two inspired IPL rookies Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma in its last match. The Titans will look to regroup and explore ways to neutralise, if not limit the damage from Mayank. Titans batter David Miller said his team wasn't too worried about facing Mayank and was prepared to attack him and his fellow bowlers. The return to form of captain Shubhman Gill and explosive finish by Rahul Tewatia were some positive takeaways for Titans from the last match. But the Titans will have to put in a more determined and polished performance to beat the Super Giants at home.

Task cut out: LSG would hope its skipper Rahul would hit top form against GT. SANDEEP SAXENA

Today's matches

Mumbai Indians vs Delhi Capitals
Mumbai, 3.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **33**
MI 18 | DC 15
PREVIOUS MEETING
MI won by six wickets, 2023

Lucknow Super Giants vs Gujarat Titans
Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **4**
LSG 0 | GT 4
PREVIOUS MEETING
GT won by 56 runs, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

> If you can give Mayank an opportunity in white ball cricket, T20 cricket, which is not taxing on his body it will be perfect
> **MORNE MORKEL**

INBRIEF

Mohammedan Sporting crowned I-League champion

Mohammedan Sporting clinched its maiden I-League title in Shillong on Saturday, defeating Shillong Lajong FC 2-1 in its penultimate match, a result which also promoted it to Indian Super League. Alexis Gomes put Sporting in the front in the first minute before the home side's Douglas Tardin restored parity in the 15th. Evgeni Kozlov, *in pic.*, scored the decisive goal for Sporting in the 62nd minute. Sporting has 52 points from 23 matches with one game left to play. It is eight points ahead of second-placed Sreenidi Deccan (44 from 22).

Australia proves too good for India in first hockey Test

The Indian men's hockey team was hammered 1-5 by Australia in the first Test of the five-match series in Perth on Saturday. Australia controlled the tempo right from start to finish. The Indians showed some sparks in the final quarter but it was too little too late. Tom Wickham (20th and 38th) scored a brace, while Tim Brand (third), Joel Rintala (37th) and Flynn Ogilvie (57th) were the other goal-getters for the winner. Gurjant Singh scored India's lone goal in the 47th.

Tharun and Anupama clinch titles in Kazakhstan

India's Tharun Mannepalli and Anupama emerged the men's and women's champions of the Kazakhstan International Challenge badminton in Uralsk on Saturday. The 22-year-old Tharun, who was runner-up at senior National in December, beat eighth-seeded Malaysian Soong Joo Ven 21-10, 21-19 for his maiden international title. The 19-year-old Anupama posted a 21-15, 21-16 win over compatriot Isharani Baruah. In mixed-doubles, Sanjai Srivatsa Dhanraj and K. Maneesha lost 21-9, 7-21, 12-21 to Malaysia's Wong Tien Ci and Lim Chiew Sien.

Velavan loses in quarterfinals of German Open squash

National champion Velavan Senthilkumar was handed a straight-game defeat by higher-ranked Eain Yow Ng of Malaysia in the quarterfinals of the German Open squash in Hamburg. World No. 59 Velavan, a 2023 Asian silver medallist, went down 7-11, 6-11, 4-11 to the fourth seed at the $50,000 PSA World Tour Bronze event on Friday.

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 6.30 a.m.
Formula One: Japanese GP, F1 TV, F1 TV Pro & FanCode, 10.30 a.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 & Jio Cinema App, 3.30 & 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: Jio Cinema App, 4, 6.30; Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Monday)
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7 & 9 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1, 2 & Hotstar, 8, 10 & 10.30 p.m.

I would have liked a break before T20 World Cup: Lara on IPL schedule

The West Indian great says that the two bouncers per over rule is helping the bowlers; adds that this has not, however, curbed the run scoring

CRICKET

V.V. Subrahmanyam
HYDERABAD

West Indies great Brian Lara feels that the IPL has become the biggest platform for the younger players to showcase their talent.

In an exclusive interview with *The Hindu*, the 54-year-old Lara, who is now on the *Star Sports* TV commentary panel for the on-going IPL, shared his thoughts on the tournament and other related issues.

"Oh! IPL is great in terms of unearthing talent. I like young fast bowler Mayank Yadav. Four years ago, it was Umran Malik of SRH. It is good to see India produce so many young pacers.

Exciting times: Lara talked about how IPL is great in terms of unearthing talent. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"They should be groomed and considered for the longer version of the game," Lara said.

"The game has grown every single year of IPL. It is a wonderful product of the BCCI."

"There is a major difference every year in the IPL. The sequence of par scores are always increasing. What is happening in PowerPlay is something really special," Lara added.

"The two-bouncers per over rule is interesting. It helps the bowlers sort out the batters who are not comfortable with the bouncer. But, it has also not stopped the run scoring."

Question for the players

On criticism that IPL ends often too close to commencement of major events like World Cups, Lara felt it was more a question for the players.

"But, if I were playing, I would like a break from playing cricket before a World Cup. I believe team bonding is important before any World event," Lara said.

"But, again, the IPL window as such doesn't allow any scope for such things. Still, the players, captains and coaches love togetherness.

"They don't get straight into a World Cup without getting to know each other better. Again, every single team suffers from that," he explained.

When asked whether players are forced to change their natural game in the IPL, Lara said: "I can't say that about the younger players for they are so eager to come and dream of playing in the IPL."

Enjoying the stint

"I am enjoying my commentary after my stint with SRH as head coach. It is very exciting though playing is something that came naturally to me. It is a great 'family' out there on *Star Sports*," he signed off.

Perfect execution: Unadkat credited the bowling group for sticking to the plans and coming out on top. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

It was about adapting to conditions: Unadkat

V. V. Subrahmanyam
HYDERABAD

"The two-bouncer rule is helping the bowlers in the on-going IPL and we were good in our strategy in using the long boundaries in our favour, surprising the batters with regular changes in pace and slow bouncers," Sunrisers Hyderabad left-arm pacer Jaydev Unadkat said after his team beat Chennai Super Kings in the IPL league match here on Friday night.

"The bowlers have to be unpredictable in terms of their line and pace. The slow balls were sticking into the pitch and it was about adapting to the conditions," Unadkat said.

"I think from what we have seen so far both the wickets where the slow balls were sticking into the pitch, the conditions were suitable for those kind of deliveries," he said.

For his part, CSK head coach Stephen Fleming said his team was outplayed by the host and reckoned that 180-190 was a par score on this pitch. "The SRH bowlers bowled incredibly well in the last five overs to restrict CSK to 165," he added.

On Mukesh Chaudhary bowling the second most expensive over ever in IPL (conceding 27 runs including a no-ball), Fleming said that it was not his day.

"The first five or six overs were the best to bat and the aggressive way in which SRH played showed that," Fleming said.

After twin defeats, Ruturaj faces first real test as CSK skipper

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

On the eve of the season, Ruturaj Gaikwad was handed one of the most challenging jobs in the IPL after being named captain of the Chennai Super Kings. No team is built around the aura of one player like CSK is with its former leader M.S. Dhoni and it is not easy to fill his shoes.

The last time Super Kings attempted to move forward by appointing Ravindra Jadeja as captain in 2022, the experiment ended in disappointment after just eight games. This time, in Ruturaj, the team found a young player with leadership experience and subtly groomed him for the job over two years.

Unlike Jadeja, the 27-year-old had a smoother start to his captaincy stint with two wins at home upfront. But, he has now been handed a reality check with back-to-back losses in the last two matches on the road. After the short honeymoon period, Ruturaj faces his first real test and needs to find a way to arrest the slide quickly.

Time to fire: Ruturaj has had an inconsistent start with no fifty so far. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

And it will have to start with his form as Ruturaj, the batter, has had an inconsistent start in the four outings with no half-century. In 2021 and 2023, his contributions at the top played a vital role in the team's wins.

However, this year the opener's strike-rate has dipped alarmingly to 118.91 from 147.5 in 2023 and the lack of quick runs in the PowerPlay was one of the main reasons for the twin defeats. Oppositions have also exploited his weakness against left-arm pacers, who dismissed him in the first three matches, and he quickly needs to sort it out.

Even tactically, the team missed a trick or two in Friday's game against Sunrisers Hyderabad. On a pitch where cutters and taking pace off the deliveries was the way to go, the team did not get off-spinner Moeen Ali to open the attack despite having two left-handers at the wicket. Even with four spin options, Ruturaj's decision to hold them back was also strange, especially when the pacers were being taken to the cleaners.

Task cut out

As CSK returns to the comfort of its home ground for the game against Kolkata Knight Riders on Monday, Ruturaj has his task cut out as a batter and skipper to get the defending champion's campaign back on track.

Gujrathi stuns Nakamura; Gukesh beats Praggnanandhaa

CANDIDATES CHESS

Sports Bureau

Vidit Gujrathi stunned second seed Hikaru Nakamura in the second round of the Candidates chess tournament in Toronto on Friday.

The day's three other games in the Open section also produced decisive results, in sharp contrast to the first day when all the games were drawn.

In the women's event, China's Tan Zhongyi posted her second win on the trot. She is on two points, half-a-point ahead of Russian Aleksandra Goryachkina.

In the Open tournament, four players share the lead in these very early days – another 12 rounds remain. Gujrathi, Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi, D. Gukesh and top seed Fabiano Caruana of the United States have 1.5 points each.

Well-prepared: Gujrathi, right, proved too good for Nakamura. FIDE

Gukesh joined the leaders after accounting for R. Praggnanandhaa in a much anticipated clash between two Chennai-based Indian teenagers. The younger player – though only by nine months – won in 33 moves from the black side of a Catalan Opening.

Gujrathi's victory against Nakamura was, of course, the day's highlight.

Not just because the American's last defeat in a classical game of chess was in 2022, to China's Ding Liren the current World champion, in the final round of the Candidates tournament. Nakamura, since then, went undefeated for 47 games.

That was until he ran into a well-prepared Gujrathi, who, playing black, offered to sacrifice his bishop as early as the 11th move, a novelty in the Ruy Lopez game.

The American resigned another 18 moves later, following a discovered check by the dominant Gujrathi, who later thanked his team of seconds for their help in the preparation.

Nakamura's last defeat in a classical game was in 2022, since then he has been undefeated in 47 games
In the women's event, Zhongyi posted her second win on the trot

In the women's event, India's Koneru Humpy drew with Russia's Kateryna Lagno, while R. Vaishali, Praggnanandhaa's elder sister, went down to the leader, Tan.

The results, second round:
Open: Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 0.5 lost to Vidit Gujrathi 1.5; R. Praggnanandhaa 0.5 lost to D. Gukesh 1.5.
Ian Nepomniachtchi (FIDE) 1.5 bt Alireza Firouzja (Fra) 0.5; Fabiano Caruana (USA) 1.5 bt Nijat Abasov (Aze) 0.5.
Women: Tan Zhongyi (Chn) 2 bt R. Vaishali; Aleksandra Goryachkina (FDE) 1.5 bt Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 0.5; Kateryna Lagno (FIDE) 1 drew with Koneru Humpy 1; Nurgyul Salimova (Bul) 1 drew with Lei Tingjie (Chn) 0.5.

Ankita Raina & Chia Yi Tsao claim doubles title in Japan

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

Anita Raina and Chia Yi Tsao of Taiwan beat Madeleine Brooks and Eudice Wong Chong 6-4, 6-4 in the doubles final of the $40,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Kashiwa, Japan, on Saturday. It was the 29th doubles title in the professional circuit for the 31-year-old Ankita.

In the €651,865 ATP tournament in Marrakech, Yuki Bhambri and Albano Olivetti of Fance lost 7-5, 3-6, [10-7] in the doubles semifinals to second seeds Alexander Erler and Lucas Miedler.

The results:
€651, 865 ATP, Marrakech: Doubles: Semifinals: Alexander Erler & Lucas Miedler bt Yuki Bhambri & Albano Olivetti 7-5, 3-6, [10-7].

Victorious: Doubles champions Chia Yi Tsao and Ankita Raina in Japan on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

$742,350 ATP, Houston: Doubles: Semifinals: Max Purcell & Jordan Thompson bt Sriram Balaji & Andre Begemann 6-7(5), 6-2, [10-3].
$40,000 ITF women, Kashiwa, Japan: Doubles: Final: Ankita Raina & Chia Yi Tsao bt Madeleine Brooks & Eudice Wong Chong 6-4, 6-4.
$25,000 ITF women, Bujumbura, Burundi: Doubles: Semifinals: Weronika Falkowska & Stephanie Visscher bt Riya Bhatia & Diana Marcinkevica 2-6, 6-3, [10-8].

Verstappen takes pole in Japan for the third year in a row

Sainz qualifies in fourth; Hamilton and Russell of Mercedes to start from seventh and ninth respectively

Speeding away: Verstappen set the pace with a lap of one minute 28.197 seconds. REUTERS

JAPANESE GP

Reuters
SUZUKA

Formula One world champion Max Verstappen took pole position for a third straight year at the Japanese Grand Prix on Saturday, with Sergio Perez qualifying second to ensure a Red Bull front-row lockout. McLaren's Lando Norris will start Sunday's race in third place.

Verstappen, who will be looking for a third straight victory in Japan, becomes the first driver to take pole in the opening four races of a season since Lewis Hamilton nine years ago.

"It was very close in the end, nevertheless most importantly to be on pole – of course you want every lap to be perfect but at a track like this it isn't always the case," the Dutchman said after setting the pace with a lap of one minute 28.197 seconds.

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz qualified in fourth with teammate Charles Leclerc frustrated by a difficult drive which will see him start back in eighth.

"That's the best I can do. Honestly, I don't get it," Leclerc said over the team radio.

Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso and McLaren's Oscar Piastri, who celebrated his 23rd birthday on Saturday, finished in fifth and sixth respectively.

Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton and George Russell, both of Mercedes, were seventh and ninth, with local hero Yuki Tsunoda getting one of the biggest cheers of the day sneaking into the final round of qualifying and starting 10th on Sunday.

The grid: Front row: Max Verstappen (Red Bull), Sergio Perez (Red Bull); **Second row:** Lando Norris (McLaren), Carlos Sainz (Ferrari); **Third row:** Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin), Oscar Piastri (McLaren). **Fourth row:** Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), Charles Leclerc (Ferrari). **Fifth row:** George Russell (Mercedes), Yuki Tsunoda (RB). **Sixth row:** Daniel Ricciardo (RB), Nico Hulkenberg (Haas); **Seventh row:** Valtteri Bottas (Sauber), Alexander Albon (Williams); Eighth row: Esteban Ocon (Alpine), Lance Stroll (Aston Martin); **Ninth row:** Pierre Gasly (Alpine), Kevin Magnussen (Haas); **10th row:** Logan Sargeant (Williams), Zhou Guanyu (Sauber).

Woods appears set for Masters start

Agence France-Presse
AUGUSTA

Tiger Woods appears set to make his 26th start at the Masters next week, but the 15-time Major winner remains hampered by severe leg injuries.

Woods remains among those in the tournament field on the event website rather than among non-playing champions.

But the 48-year-old superstar is struggling with injuries, according to his long-time friend Notah Begay.

"He's trying to formulate a strategy and approach that he can work with given the constraints that he is presented with," Begay told reporters. "He has got zero mobility in that left ankle."

The main struggle for Woods is walking a full four rounds, Begay said.

East Bengal welcomes struggling Bengaluru FC

ISL

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

East Bengal will seek to extend its new found form when it hosts a struggling Bengaluru FC in a match-week-21 fixture here on Sunday.

Both teams will wish to collect the maximum points to brighten their play-off prospects. Bengaluru is currently seventh with 22 points from 20 outings while East Bengal is with 21 from 20.

With five teams having already ensured their qualification to the play-offs, both Bengaluru and East Bengal are fighting for the sixth spot where Chennaiyin FC is currently positioned with 24 points.

East Bengal has reasons to be confident after having downed a strong Kerala Blasters at the latter's home in its previous outing. East Bengal coach Carles Cuadrat hoped that his team will put in the best of efforts to capitalise on it.

Cleiton Silva. X@EASTBENGAL_FC

"This season we are fighting for a play-off spot. There are not many matches left but I hope that the boys remain focused and get the points," Cuadrat said.

"The mood is positive and we're training in very good conditions. It is like a playoff game. If we win, we keep going and if we lose, the probability is much less for us to qualify," said the Bengaluru FC coach Gerard Zaragoza.

SNAPSHOT

'England Test team needs common sense'
Batting legend Geoffrey Boycott on Saturday reiterated his aversion for England's 'Bazball' way of cricket, and exhorted the coaching staff to instil a dose of "common sense" to their methods.
The root of Boycott's criticism was England's failure to emerge winners in two important series – in the Ashes against Australia in 2023 and in the series against India earlier this year.

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